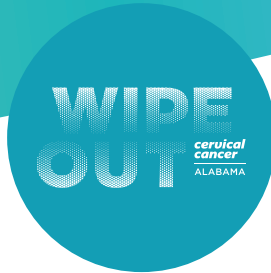


Tips for Talking to Hesitant Parents About HPV Vaccination



OPERATION WIPE OUT Champions

Below are some suggestions on talking points when sharing information and/or educating others.

1 Listen First Without Judgment

Start by asking:

- “What concerns do you have?” or “What have you heard about the HPV vaccine?”

Let them speak fully before jumping in. People respond better when they feel heard, not lectured.

Focus on the specific concern raised by the individual and avoid bringing up other concerns.



2 Acknowledge and Empathize

Validate their concerns without endorsing misinformation or saying that the person is wrong.

- “That’s a really common question — I wondered the same thing at first.”
- “I can see you just want to make the best decision for your child.”

This shows you’re on their side, not trying to win a debate.

3 Reframe the Vaccine as Cancer Prevention, Not About Sex

Emphasize that this is a cancer vaccine.

- “The HPV vaccine is about **preventing cancer**, not about sex. It works best when given early, before someone is exposed — just like other routine childhood vaccines.”

Use comparisons they know: “It’s like the chickenpox or tetanus shot. We give it before there’s a risk.”



4 Share Personal Stories or Testimonials

Stories move hearts better than statistics.

- “I got my daughter vaccinated at age 11. I wanted to protect her the best way I could.”
- “One mom told me she was scared at first but later was so relieved she did it.”

If you or someone you know had cervical cancer, sharing that story (if appropriate) can be powerful.



5 Highlight the Safety and Track Record

Reassure them with facts **without sounding too clinical**.

- “The HPV vaccine has been approved and used since 2006 and given to **millions of children, adolescents, and young adults**. It’s one of the most studied vaccines, and it’s been shown to be **very safe**.”

Mention typical side effects (sore arm, mild fever) so they know what to expect.

Emphasize that there are no long-term effects.



6 Empower Them With a “Why Now” Message

- “By giving it at 9–12 years old, you **protect** them before there’s any risk. Later might be too late.”
- “This is one less thing they’ll have to worry about as adults.”



7 Offer Available Resources

- “Health insurance covers the HPV vaccine costs, and it is usually not part of your deductible. If your child does not have health insurance coverage, there is a federal program that covers the vaccine costs.”

Offer to connect them with the local health department.



8 Keep the Door Open

Sometimes they won’t say yes today and that’s okay.

- “Thanks for talking with me. If you ever want to talk more or get more info, I’m here.”

You’ve planted a seed. Often, it takes **multiple conversations** before people make a decision.

Additional Quick Tips

- “I respect that you’re thinking hard about this.”
- “If it helps, I can share what I’ve learned from OPERATION WIPE OUT partners, including experts in cervical cancer.”
- “Let’s make sure your child is protected for the future, just like with other vaccines.”
- “You don’t have to decide today, but I’d love to get you some trusted information.”

DISCLAIMER: The purpose of these tips is to facilitate conversations based on our experience in Alabama as well as recent scientific literature. It is not encompassing of all concerns OPERATION WIPE OUT champions and partners will face in the community.

For more information and resources go to www.operationwipeout.org and/or reach out to OPERATION WIPE OUT coordinating partners.

