



**fraserhealth**

October 15, 2014

Dear Parent:

This letter is to inform you of a change to the HPV (Human Papillomavirus) immunization program for school-age girls in BC. **Starting October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014, girls in grade 9 will no longer receive a third dose of the HPV vaccine if their first 2 doses were given at least 6 months apart.**

The consent forms for school based immunizations were created **prior** to this change in dose schedule, and therefore still list 3 doses. However, if your child has already received 2 doses of HPV vaccine at least 6 months apart, her series is complete and she will not receive a 3<sup>rd</sup> dose, even if you consented for all 3 doses.

This change is based on considerable evidence from several studies that show 2 doses provide as much protection as 3 doses when given at younger ages. As a result several other countries have moved to a 2 dose HPV schedule, and the Canadian National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has recommended a 2 dose schedule for girls starting their series before their 15<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Grade 9 girls who want to **start** their HPV series can call their local Public Health Unit for an appointment. The vaccine for these girls is free of charge. The vaccine can also be accessed through your local Family Physician or Immunizing Pharmacist.

Please refer to the following question and answers for further information:

**Why is this change being made part way through the school year?**

BC is committed to providing an immunization program that is based on the most recent scientific evidence and ensuring that provincial vaccine recommendations are in line with national and international recommendations. Given evidence from several research studies and NACI’s recommendations the BC Public Health Committee decided that it was best to act on these recommendations as soon as possible.

**What if my daughter has already received 3 doses of HPV vaccine? Is this safe?**

Yes, the recommendations made state that either a 2 dose or a 3 dose series of HPV vaccine may be given in younger girls; both are very safe and effective.

**What if my daughter has only had one dose of HPV vaccine or the two doses were given less than 6 months apart?**

Please contact your local public health unit to make arrangements to have your daughter’s immunization record reviewed. The public health nurse will tell you if your daughter requires any additional doses of the HPV vaccine.

**What if my daughter has never received the HPV vaccine?**

HPV vaccine is very safe and effective and has been proven to prevent cervical cancer and genital warts. It is never too late for your daughter to receive the HPV vaccine. Girls who receive the first dose of HPV vaccine after their 15<sup>th</sup> birthday will still require 3 doses to be fully protected.

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