



HPV VACCINATION RATES LOW DESPITE RISKS OF RELATED CANCERS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer among women globally, while certain throat cancer diagnoses¹ are rising at unprecedented rates among men and women. HPV is responsible for 70-90% of these cancers in the U.S.² Yet HPV vaccination rates remain distressingly low, with less than 30% completion among children ages 10-13.

Two doses of the HPV vaccine are required for full immunity among this age group.³ While it is not required for school admission across the U.S. like many other vaccines, the HPV vaccine is easily accessible at annual wellness visits and is a critical step in fighting these preventable diseases. Our analysis looked at HPV vaccination rates over a three-year period for the commercially insured population ages 10-13.

AMONG CHILDREN AGES 10-13:

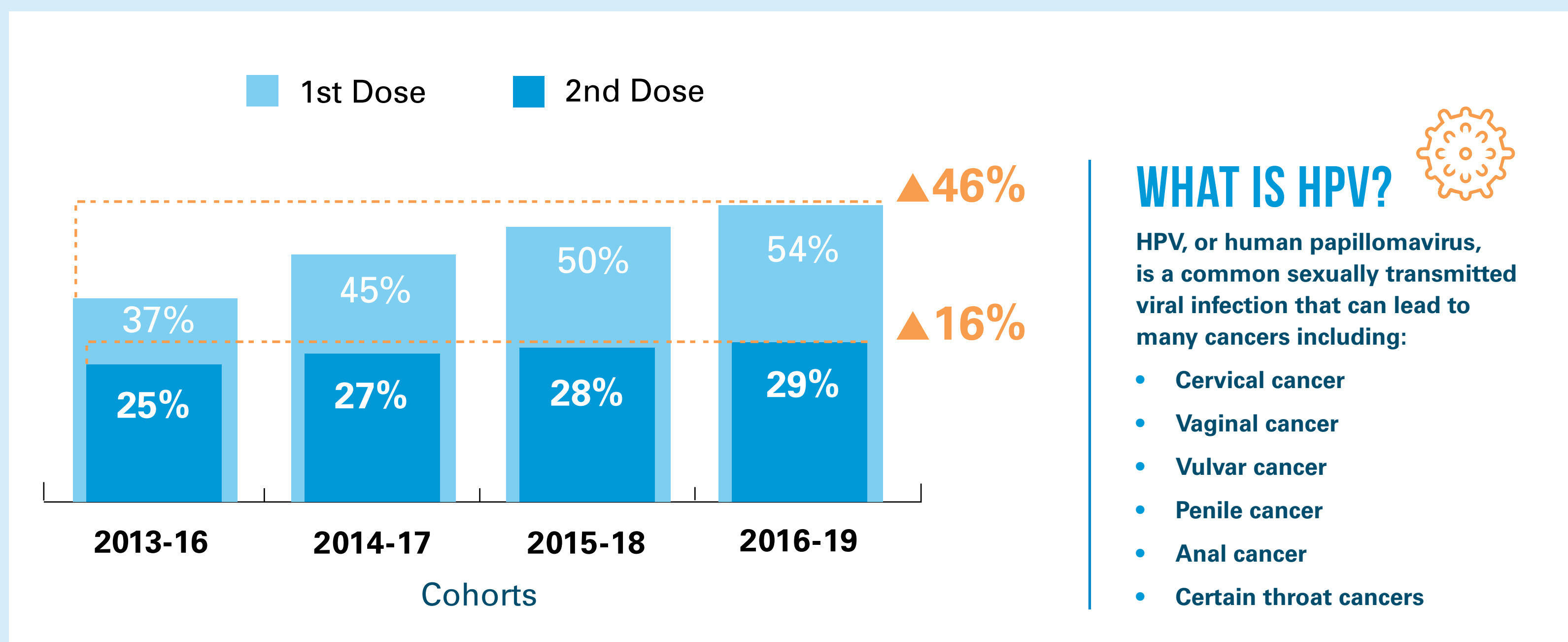
> **50%**
GET 1ST DOSE OF HPV VACCINE

< **30%**
GET 2ND DOSE OF HPV VACCINE

HPV VACCINE COMPLETION RATES ARE **5X HIGHER** FOR THOSE WITH 2+ WELLNESS VISITS OVER THREE-YEAR PERIOD

LOW COMPLETION RATES OF HPV VACCINE

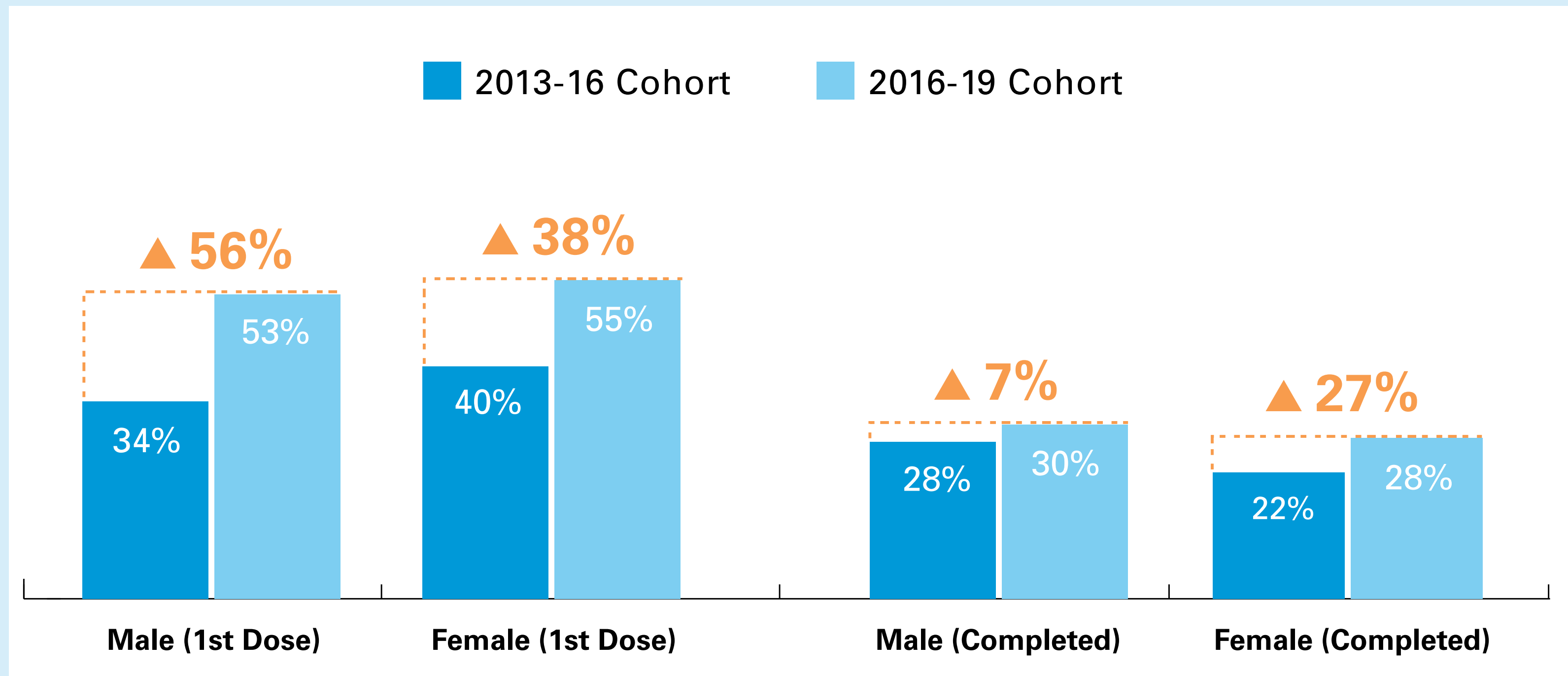
COMPLETION RATES OF THE HPV VACCINE ARE GROWING MUCH SLOWER THAN INITIATION OF THE FIRST DOSE



WHAT IS HPV?
HPV, or human papillomavirus, is a common sexually transmitted viral infection that can lead to many cancers including:

- Cervical cancer
- Vaginal cancer
- Vulvar cancer
- Penile cancer
- Anal cancer
- Certain throat cancers

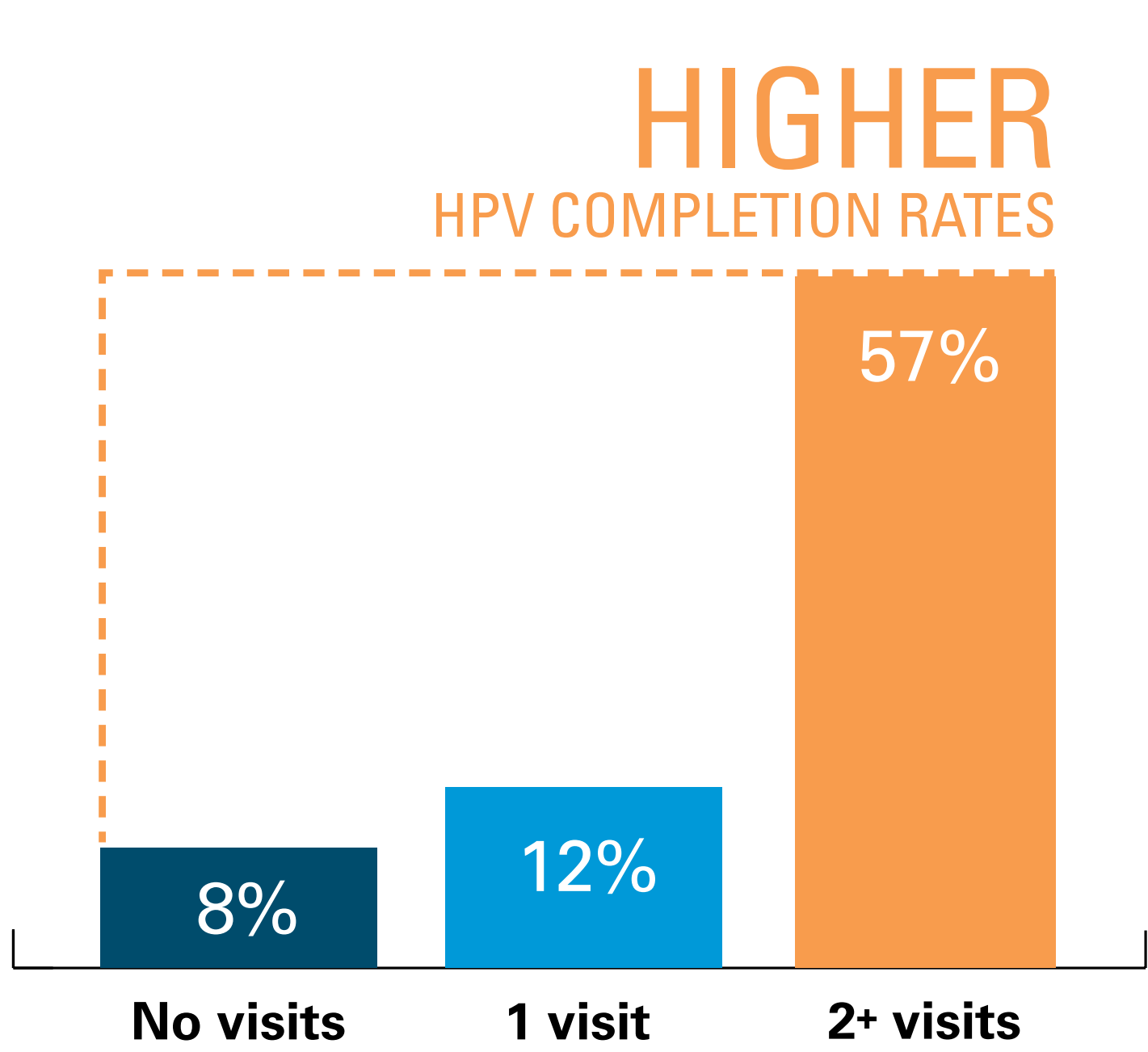
INITIATION RATES ARE GROWING MOST RAPIDLY AMONG MALES, WHILE GROWTH OF COMPLETION RATES IS HIGHER AMONG FEMALES



The impact of COVID-19 on HPV vaccination rates was significant. Through October 2020, there has been a 13.5% drop in the number of HPV vaccines administered versus 2019.

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE HPV VACCINATION RATES?

Looking at HPV vaccination rates over a three-year period for ages 10-13 shows 5X higher completion rates, underscoring the importance of adhering to prescribed well child visits.



Parents may need further education on the benefits and safety of the HPV vaccine. Among parents whose children did not receive the vaccine:⁴

- 29%** were unsure about the HPV vaccine's effectiveness
- 25%** did not vaccinate their child because it was not required
- 22%** had concerns about side effects

WHY IT MATTERS

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection.² However, HPV vaccination rates remain much lower than other recommended vaccines for the 10-13 age group.⁵ By vaccinating our children against HPV, we are not only preventing viral infections, but also reducing the risk of cancers later in life—many of which are or are becoming increasingly common.

Both during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, it is vitally important to continue routine vaccinations for children and adults of all ages. As with the COVID-19 vaccine, getting both doses of the HPV vaccine is critical for effective vaccination. These preventive measures help ensure the health and safety of our families and communities.

In local communities across the U.S., Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies are working to improve vaccination rates by expanding access to remote regions, launching educational campaigns, targeting vulnerable communities and driving completion rate growth.

[Learn More](#)

Source: BCBS Axis Data
Vaccination rates were aggregated by ZIP code for regional and race/ethnicity comparisons. Race/ethnicity is determined by ZIP code when more than 50% of the households identify as either Black, Hispanic or white.

1. HPV can infect the mouth and throat and cause cancers of the oropharynx.
2. CDC: HPV and cancer
3. The second dose of the HPV vaccine is recommended 6-12 months after the first.
4. 2020 Blue Cross Blue Shield Association Vaccination Consumer Survey.
5. BCBS Axis Data found rates for Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis) and meningococcal vaccines at 94% and 90%, respectively, among the 2016-2019 cohort.