



# Barry-Eaton District Health Department

Be Active • Be Safe • Be Healthy

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## January is Cervical Health Awareness Month

January is Cervical Health Awareness Month and The Barry-Eaton District Health Department reminds residents that cervical cancer is almost 100 percent preventable with recommended vaccination, and regular, routine screening tests and follow up. It also is highly curable when found and treated early. There are steps anyone can take to prevent cervical cancer!

HPV (human papillomavirus) is a very common virus that spreads through sexual activity. About 14 million Americans, including teens, become infected with HPV each year, but many people with HPV don't know they are infected. Long-lasting infection with certain types of HPV is the main cause of cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is highly preventable in most Western countries because screening tests and a vaccine to prevent HPV infections are available. When cervical cancer is found early, it is highly treatable and associated with long survival and good quality of life. HPV can also cause anal cancer, throat cancer and genital warts in anyone.

The HPV vaccine is **cancer prevention**. Two doses of the HPV vaccine are recommended for **all children, regardless of gender, at ages 11-12**; the vaccine can be given as early as age 9. Children who start the vaccine series on or after their 15th birthday need three shots given over 6 months. If your teen hasn't gotten the vaccine yet, talk to their doctor about getting it as soon as possible. The vaccine is most effective when given at the recommended age of 11-12 years so they are protected before ever being exposed to the virus; however, it can be given to anyone up to age 26. Some adults ages 27 through 45 years may decide to get the HPV vaccine based on discussion with their clinician, if they did not get adequately vaccinated when they were younger

### In honor of National Cervical Health Awareness Month, The Barry-Eaton District Health Department (BEDHD) encourages:

- Individuals to talk with their health care provider and **stay current** on cervical cancer screening.
- Women to start getting regular Pap tests at age 21.
- All individuals to check to see if they are eligible for the HPV vaccine.

BEDHD connects women to breast and cervical cancer screening services through the Michigan Breast and Cervical Cancer Control and Navigation Program (BCCCNP). If you need cervical cancer screening or have an abnormal mammogram or Pap test and your insurance doesn't completely pay for additional tests, visit our website for qualification guidelines or call (616) 632-7283 or (888) 515-1300 ext. 7283 in Barry County or (517) 887-4364 or (877) 221-6505 in Eaton County.

Most health insurances pay for the HPV vaccine, including Medicaid and the Healthy Michigan Plan. If you or your child do not have insurance that covers vaccines, contact the Barry-Eaton District Health Department at 517-541-2630 in Eaton County or 269-798-4133 in Barry County for low cost vaccine options. For more information, visit [www.barryeatonhealth.org](http://www.barryeatonhealth.org) or visit us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/barryeatonhealth)!