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## HPV/Genital Warts Health Center

### HPV Vaccine for Women Aged 19-26?

#### Study Backs HPV Vaccination for Young Adult Women, Regardless of Risk Factors

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WebMD Health News

Feb. 12, 2008 -- A new study supports giving all women aged 19-26 the [HPV vaccine](#), if they haven't already been vaccinated, regardless of their backgrounds.

HPV (human papillomavirus) is a common virus spread through sex. It's a leading cause of [cervical cancer](#), but most women with HPV don't develop cervical [cancer](#).

Gardasil, the HPV vaccine, targets four [types of HPV](#). It must be given before a woman is infected with those types of HPV.

Gardasil is approved for girls and women aged 9-26. The CDC recommends it for all girls aged 11-12, with "catch-up" doses for girls aged 13-26 who missed earlier vaccination.

But the HPV vaccine's use in women aged 19-26 has been a matter of debate.

The American Cancer Society argues that there isn't enough evidence to recommend that all women aged 19-26 get the vaccine. So the American Cancer Society advises women in that age range to discuss the vaccine with a health care provider.

That's where the new study comes in.

The study included 3,276 sexually active young women aged 18-26 who provided urine samples and answered questions about their sexual history.

About 9% of the women tested positive for at least one of the four HPV types targeted by Gardasil. None tested positive for all four of those HPV types.

The more risk factors a woman had, the more likely she was to have HPV. But it's not clear which risk factors were most important.

Also, some women had been exposed to HPV, but not to all four types of HPV targeted by Gardasil. Those women might miss out on some protection if they didn't get the vaccine, according to the researchers, who included the University of Michigan's Amanda Dempsey, MD, PhD, MPH.

Their study, published in the Feb. 20, 2008, edition of *Vaccine*, doesn't change official recommendations for the HPV vaccine's use.

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