

THINK ABOUT THE LINK[®]

HPV
Cervical Oropharyngeal Anal Cancer
HEP B
HEP C
Liver Cancer
A Campaign of the Prevent Cancer Foundation[®]

Think About The Link[®] Screening and the Importance of Co-Testing for Cervical Cancer Prevention January 18, 2018 Action Toolkit

Many people are unaware of the link between certain viruses and cancer—but the human papillomavirus (HPV) is linked to at least six types of cancer, including cervical cancer. While there is a vaccine available for HPV, vaccination rates in the U.S. are startlingly low, and many people do not take the steps to protect themselves and their loved ones from this virus, and ultimately, prevent cancer.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the vaccine for all girls and boys ages 11-12, when the immune system response is strongest. A catch-up vaccine may be available for teens and young adults.

In this toolkit, you will find three ways to help amplify this critical public health message — submit an op-ed, develop policy or advocacy initiatives or build a social media campaign to raise awareness in your state. Thank you for using your voice and empowering others to take charge of their health. Together, we can **Stop Cancer Before It Starts!**[®]

Submit an Op-Ed

Most newspapers accept op-eds from readers, and this is a great way to share your message with a broad audience. If you are a prominent figure or are writing about your particular area of expertise (for instance, if you are a health professional), there is a better chance your op-ed will be selected. Smaller media markets are also easier to break into, so we recommend submitting your op-ed to a smaller, local paper rather than competing to get published in The New York Times or The Washington Post.

On the next page is a sample op-ed, which will also be included in the soft copy of the toolkit that will be emailed to you after the briefing. **If you would like to request a personalized/unique op-ed for your use**, or if you need help submitting to your chosen newspaper, please contact **Taylor Patton** at Taylor.Patton@preventcancer.org.





Think About The Link®

Screening and the Importance of
Co-Testing for Cervical Cancer Prevention
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Action Toolkit

Think About The Link® between HPV and cancer

For hundreds of years, science's brightest minds have been researching cancer so we can put a stop to these deadly diseases. But while some types of cancer remain a mystery, others can often be prevented or detected early, when successful treatment is more likely.

Since January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, it's worth noting that cervical cancer is highly preventable. But if that's the case—then why are 13,000 women in the U.S. diagnosed with this disease each year, and more than 4,000 women in the U.S. dying from cervical cancer every year?

The majority (91 percent) of cervical cancers are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is a common virus that infects about 14 million Americans each year, and is linked to not just cervical cancer, but at least five other types of cancer. It is the primary cause of oropharyngeal (back of throat) cancer, which is on the rise in men, as well as anal, vaginal, vulvar and penile cancers.

Fortunately, there is a safe, effective vaccine to protect against HPV. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the HPV vaccine to all girls AND boys ages 11-12, when immune system response is strongest. Most teenagers and young adults can get “catch-up” vaccines if they miss this window. Recently, the CDC changed the HPV vaccination recommendation from three doses to two doses for those under age 15.

In addition to getting the HPV vaccine, it is imperative that all women (even those who have been vaccinated) begin regular cervical cancer screening at age 21. A Pap test (also called a Pap smear) can detect precancerous or cancerous cells in the cervix. Women ages 21 to 29 need a Pap test every three years, and women ages 30 to 65 should have a Pap test every three years or co-testing with a Pap test and an HPV test every five years.

While organizations like the Prevent Cancer Foundation, American Cancer Society and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists agree on these recommendations, the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) has recently released draft guidelines at odds with the recommendations of the other groups. The draft guidelines recommend women ages 30 to 65 get a Pap test every three years or an HPV test every five years, but do not include co-testing.

Because insurance companies follow the recommendations of the USPSTF, this means millions of women could lose coverage for their co-testing, or may forgo comprehensive cervical cancer screening—and that means even more preventable deaths.

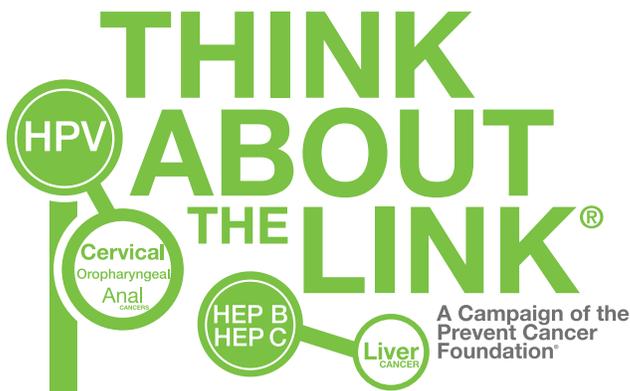
The USPSTF has not finalized these guidelines yet; I hope they will reconsider the importance of co-testing with both a Pap test and an HPV test for women ages 30 to 65.

But here's what you can do: take charge of your health. Get vaccinated, screened and/or treated for HPV and cervical cancer, get your kids vaccinated, and encourage your friends and family to do the same. It's time to think about the link between viruses and cancer. Talk to your health care professional today.

**For more information about HPV and cancer,
visit www.ThinkAboutTheLink.org.**



www.ThinkAboutTheLink.org



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Policy and Advocacy Options

Some states have not taken any action to educate the public on HPV and the cancers it can cause. However, you can take action to increase awareness and access for your constituents:

Education and awareness programs

Many people do not seek out the HPV vaccine because they are unaware of its cancer prevention benefits or that it even exists. Though the vaccine has been proven safe and effective, misinformation has created a sense of uncertainty about the vaccine's safety. You can make a profound impact by investing in public health education initiatives so that health agencies, community health centers and other nonprofit organizations can provide evidence-based, health education and awareness programs to ensure constituents know their options.

Training for health professionals

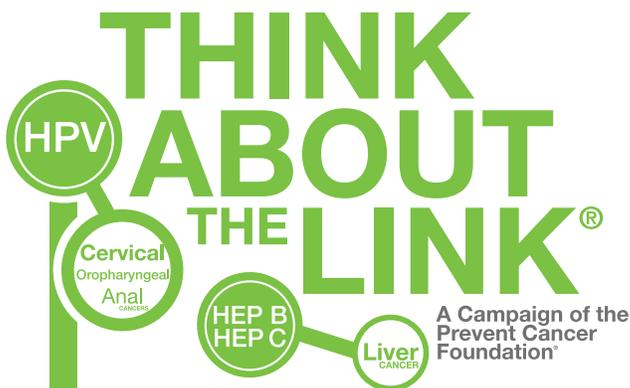
Because the HPV vaccine has been controversial, many health care professionals are hesitant about recommending the vaccine to their patients. Partner with your state's professional health associations to provide materials and train their respective members on how to effectively talk about the HPV vaccine to patients and best address patients' questions or concerns about the vaccine. These conversations can save lives.

Legislative action

Propose legislation that requires HPV vaccination for middle-school enrollment. The CDC recommends the Tdap, HPV and meningococcal vaccine at ages 11-12 for both boys and girls; however, unlike the Tdap and meningococcal vaccines, the HPV vaccine is often not required or recommended for school entry. Adding the HPV vaccine to the list of other school-required vaccines can help protect children from getting at least six types of cancer later in life.

Visit **ThinkAboutTheLink.org** and download the *HPV Legislative Report Card* to find out where your state stands in addressing the effects of HPV.





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Social Media

Social media can be a powerful tool in spreading the word about critical public health messages. Use these sample posts and tweets or tailor them for your state and create your own campaign to connect with your followers. If you would like statistics specific to your state, please contact **Gabrelle Taylor** at Gabrelle.Taylor@preventcancer.org.

Facebook Posts

1. HPV can lead to at least six types of cancer if left untreated. Learn your risk today and talk to your doctor about vaccination and screening options. #ThinkAboutTheLink Thinkaboutthelink.org
2. Around the world, 1 in 5 #cancer diagnoses is caused by a virus. Learn more about the link between viruses and cancer and how you can reduce your risk here: Thinkaboutthelink.org. #ThinkAboutTheLink
3. The #HPVvaccine can protect against at least six types of cancer, including most cervical cancers. Talk to your health care professional about getting vaccinated. #ThinkAboutTheLink Thinkaboutthelink.org
4. HPV vaccination rates in the U.S. are startlingly low. Talk to your doctor about vaccination today so you can **Stop Cancer Before It Starts!**[®]
5. African-American women are more likely to die of cervical cancer than women in other racial or ethnic groups. It's important to raise awareness for the #HPVvaccine to protect them from the virus that can cause cervical cancer. #ThinkAboutTheLink Thinkaboutthelink.org
6. Hispanic women in the United States have higher rates of #cervicalcancer than women in other racial or ethnic groups. It's important to raise awareness for the #HPVvaccine to protect them from the virus that can cause cervical cancer. #ThinkAboutTheLink Thinkaboutthelink.org
7. Only 43 percent of U.S. teens are up to date on all recommended doses of the #HPVvaccine. Talk to your child's pediatrician about vaccinations today so you can **Stop Cancer Before It Starts!**[®] #ThinkAboutTheLink
8. #HPV can cause at least six types of cancer that affect both men and women, yet only 37 percent of boys and 49 percent of girls in the U.S. are up to date on all recommended doses of the #HPVvaccine. #ThinkAboutTheLink and talk to your child's pediatrician about vaccination today so you can **Stop Cancer Before It Starts!**[®]

Tweets

1. #HPV can lead to at least 6 types of cancer if left untreated. Learn more here: Thinkaboutthelink.org #ThinkAboutTheLink
2. Worldwide, 1 in 5 cancers are virally induced. #ThinkAboutTheLink & talk to ur doc. about screenings & vaccinations. Thinkaboutthelink.org
3. #HPV related cancer rates are higher among Hispanic women. Help by getting teens vaccinated. #ThinkAboutTheLink Thinkaboutthelink.org
4. More than 90% of cervical cancers in the U.S. are caused by #HPV. Learn more here: Thinkaboutthelink.org #ThinkAboutTheLink
5. The #HPVvaccine can protect against at least 6 types of cancer. Talk to ur doc. about getting vaccinated. #ThinkAboutTheLink Thinkaboutthelink.org
6. #HPV vaccination rates in the U.S. are startlingly low. Talk to ur doc. about vaccinations today so you can #ThinkAboutTheLink Thinkaboutthelink.org
7. Only 43% of U.S. teens are up to date on all recommended doses of the #HPVvaccine. Learn more here: Thinkaboutthelink.org #ThinkAboutTheLink
8. #HPV can cause cancers that affect both men and women, yet only 37% of boys and 49% of girls in the U.S. are up to date on all recommended doses of the #HPVvaccine. #ThinkAboutTheLink Thinkaboutthelink.org