



October 20, 2014

Dear Public School Superintendents and Independent School Administrators:

**Re: HPV (Human Papillomavirus) Immunization Program**

This letter is to inform you of a change to the HPV (Human Papillomavirus) immunization program for school-age girls in BC. As of **October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014, girls 9-14 years of age only require 2 doses of HPV vaccine, given 6 months apart.** This is different from the previous schedule of 2 doses in Grade 6, with a third in Grade 9. This change means that girls in Grade 9 this year no longer need a third dose. Therefore, even if parents have signed a consent form for the vaccine, public health nurses will not be providing a third dose of HPV to these girls when administering the other Grade 9 vaccines. Following each school immunization clinic, a letter explaining the program change will be sent home with the Grade 9 girls as part of their immunization record.

There is now considerable evidence from a variety of studies that 2 doses given at younger ages provide as much protection as 3 doses. As a result, several expert bodies have recommended a two dose HPV vaccine schedule for young girls. These include the World Health Organization, the European Medicines Agency and the Canadian National Advisory Committee on Immunization. Several other countries have recently adopted a two dose HPV schedule.

The following questions and answers provide further information about this change in the vaccine schedule:

**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
- Ensuring that provincial vaccine recommendations are in line with national and international recommendations
- Acting on the recommendations as soon as possible

**What if a Grade 9 girl has already received 3 doses of HPV vaccine? Is this safe?**

Yes, the recommendations state that either a 2 dose or a 3 dose series of HPV vaccine is very safe and effective.

**Bus:** (250) 868-7885  
**Fax:** (250) 868-7826  
**Email:** renee.liddicoat@interiorhealth.ca  
**Web:** interiorhealth.ca

Kelowna Health Centre  
1340 Ellis Street  
Kelowna BC V1Y 9N1



**What if a Grade 9 girl has only had one dose of HPV vaccine or the two doses were given less than 6 months apart?**

Parents should contact their local health centre to make arrangements to have their daughter's immunization record reviewed. The public health nurse will tell them if their daughter requires any additional doses of the HPV vaccine.

**What if a Grade 9 girl 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 these girls 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.

Sincerely,

Renée Liddicoat  
Practice Lead, Promotion & Prevention  
Community Integrated Health Services

**Bus:** (250) 868-7885  
**Fax:** (250) 868-7826  
**Email:** [renee.liddicoat@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:renee.liddicoat@interiorhealth.ca)  
**Web:** [interiorhealth.ca](http://interiorhealth.ca)

Kelowna Health Centre  
1340 Ellis Street  
Kelowna BC V1Y 9N1