HPV Shot Doesn’t Increase Risky Sex Among Teen Girls

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Adolescent females who receive the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine are no likelier to take sexual risks than girls who don’t get the preventive shot, says a large new study published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal and reported by Medical News Today.

For the study, researchers followed almost 129,000 girls in Ontario, Canada, who were eligible for the province’s grade 8 HPV vaccine program between 2007 and 2009. Researchers then compared this group with girls who were in grade 8 between 2005 and 2007, two years before the school vaccination program began.

Among the girls offered the HPV shot, 6 percent became pregnant or were diagnosed with a non-HPV-related sexually transmitted infection.

When compared with the girls who were not offered the HPV vaccine, researchers said, they observed no statistically significant increase in pregnancy or non-HPV-related sexually transmitted infections.

“Findings suggest that fears of increased risky sexual behavior following HPV vaccination are unwarranted and should not be a barrier to vaccinating at a young age,” said study authors Leah Smith, MSc, of the department of epidemiology, biostatistics and occupational health at McGill University, and Linda Levesque, PhD, of the department of public health Sciences at Queen’s University.

Scientists said this is the largest study on the association between HPV vaccination and sexual behavior done so far. The report has similar results to a study conducted in the United States involving almost 1,400 girls.

FYI: Condoms won’t always protect against an HPV infection. Click here for more information.

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