



Aboriginal
Health Council
of Western Australia



Cancer
Council
WA

Stay Safe, Stay Moorditj

A family yarn about the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), the cancers it can cause, and the vaccination that can prevent it.





*Disclaimer: The word 'Aboriginal' has been used throughout this document.
When referring to 'Aboriginal' we are referring to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*



**We acknowledge
the Whadjuk people
of the Noongar Nation
as the custodians of the land
that AHCWA is located on
and we pay our respects
to all Elders, past, present,
and future.**

Developed in consultation with the WA Cervical Cancer Prevention Program and Cancer Council WA.

This story is for mob living on Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar and may be expanded to include other areas and of Western Australia in the future.

We acknowledge all people with lived experience of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and the sickness it can sometimes bring. We remember and honour those we have lost to cancers caused by HPV, holding them and their families in our koort (hearts).

We give thanks to everyone working in prevention, care, and treatment—walking alongside community to improve health and wellbeing for our people.

May this story bring knowledge, courage, and healing, so together we can look after ourselves, our moort (families), and our boodjar (Country) for the generations to come.



Hey sis, what's this Gardasil 9 needle the kids are meant to be getting at school? Did you get a note sent home about it?

We got this one here. It says I gotta sign a consent for Dylan to get an HPV vaccination, but I don't even know what HPV is!

FACT

HPV is Human Papillomavirus.

Some HPV can be prevented.

FACT

The needle or vaccine is called Gardasil 9.

It protects from nine types of HPV, seven of which can lead to cancer while two can lead to genital warts.

An illustration of a man and a woman sitting at a dark brown wooden table in a kitchen. The man, on the right, is wearing an orange long-sleeved shirt and glasses, holding a burger. The woman, on the left, is wearing a yellow top and a brown skirt, holding a fork. A white mug is on the table. In the background, there are teal kitchen cabinets and a coffee machine on a counter.

I got one too for Lakeisha. I asked the nurse at school and she told me all about it. Stops them getting the HPV that could give them cancer when they're older. It's a big problem with our kids not getting the needle now.

FACT

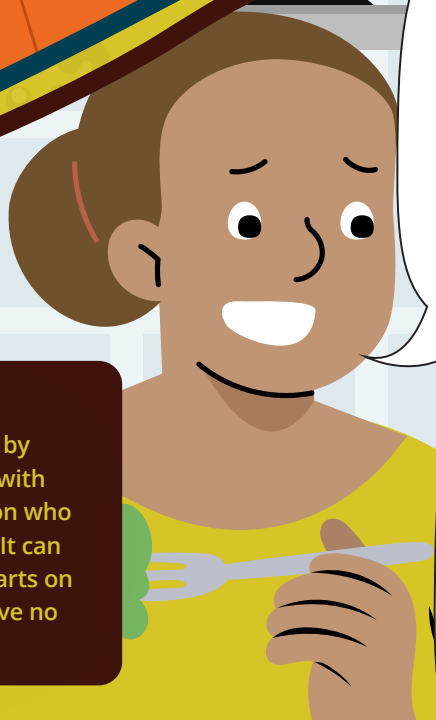
Parents or carers need to sign a consent form for their kids to get the HPV vaccination.



I heard it's for when they're *getting sexy* with someone, so why the helly do they need it now? 12 and 13 years old—they're so young!

FACT

Recommended age for all genders is 12-13 years. **Early protection is best.**



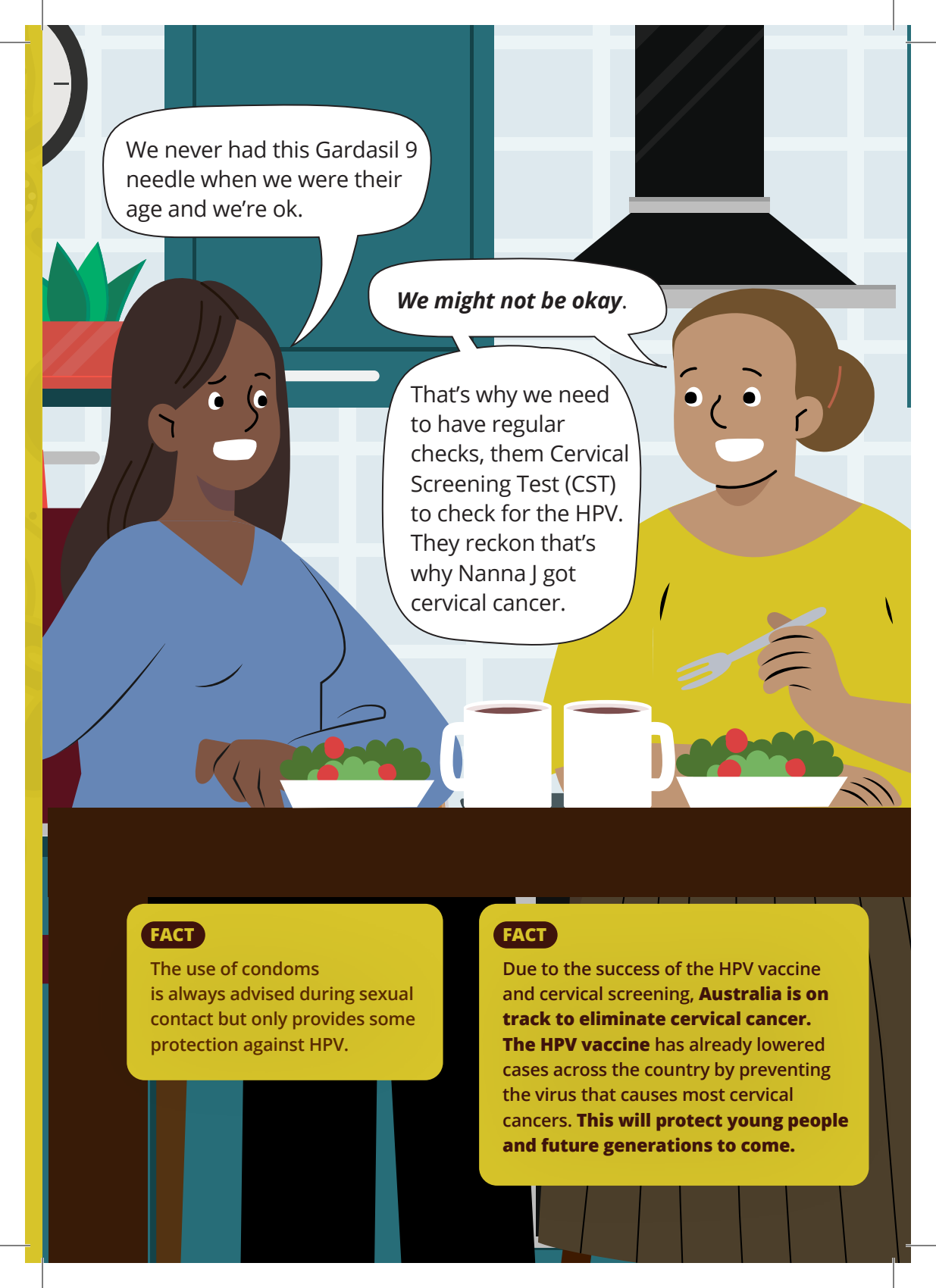
Nurse told me that it works better if they get it younger and then we know they are protected **before** they start getting sexy with someone.

FACT

HPV is spread by close contact with another person who has the virus. It can show up as warts on the skin or have no signs at all.

The virus spreads fast like a bush fire through the skin during sexual contact. Nearly all of us will have had it in our lives. It doesn't give any signs sometimes.





We never had this Gardasil 9 needle when we were their age and we're ok.

We might not be okay.

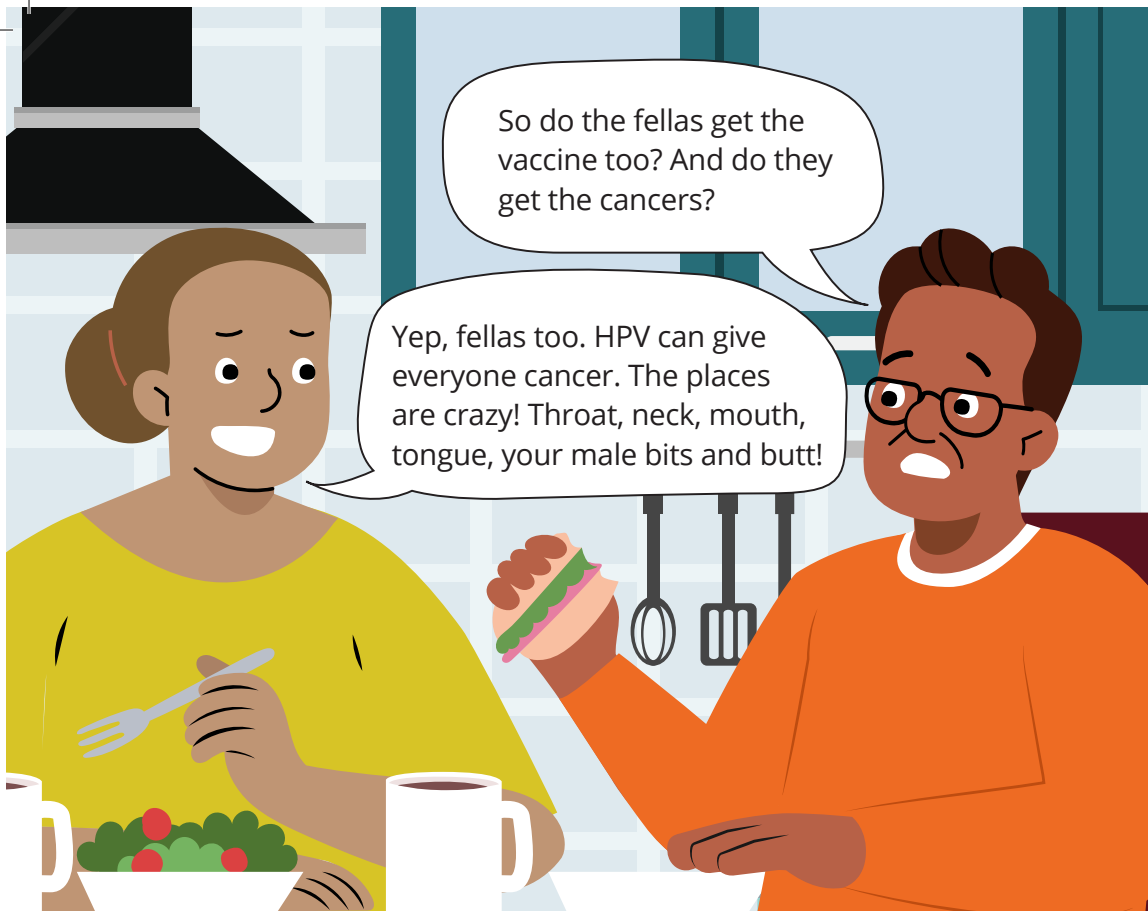
That's why we need to have regular checks, then Cervical Screening Test (CST) to check for the HPV. They reckon that's why Nanna J got cervical cancer.

FACT

The use of condoms is always advised during sexual contact but only provides some protection against HPV.

FACT

Due to the success of the HPV vaccine and cervical screening, **Australia is on track to eliminate cervical cancer.** The HPV vaccine has already lowered cases across the country by preventing the virus that causes most cervical cancers. **This will protect young people and future generations to come.**



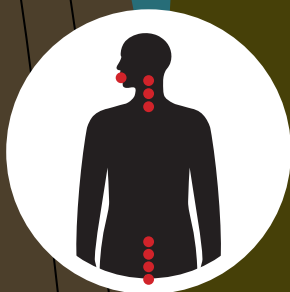
So do the fellas get the vaccine too? And do they get the cancers?

Yep, fellas too. HPV can give everyone cancer. The places are crazy! Throat, neck, mouth, tongue, your male bits and butt!

FACT

HPV can lead to cancer of the cervix, vagina, vulva, penis, anus, mouth, tongue, throat, head and neck.

It is spread by all genders.





Wow Sis! I didn't know all of that. Of course we'll be signing the consent! This is so important.

How many needles is it?



It sure is important and I'm so glad I found out more about it. We need ALL our kids to get this needle to keep mob healthy and strong.
It's only 1 needle!



How did you talk to your kids about all this? Pretty awkward? I don't know if I can do it.

Just keep it real brother. They know more than we think! And nurse gave me good resources to use to help us all understand better. Lakeisha hates needles, but who doesn't?

She just feels better about getting the vaccine needle, now that she understands the reasons why. I'll give you the links that I used.



Dylan's gonna end up on the floor if he gets this needle at school. He don't like stuff like that. Feels all weird when he gets pain. He'll skip school if he knows this is happening.



Take him to the pharmacy or the Doctor. They can give it to him in private and he won't feel any shame. Just make sure he gets it on time so he's protected early.

Give him some food before you go,

- get him to wear a short-sleeved shirt,
- keep his muscles soft,
- wiggle his toes,
- think about something else,
- and lie him down if they have a bed.

It all helps!



FACT

The Gardasil 9 vaccine is available through the school-based immunisation program, at medical clinics, Aboriginal Medical Services, and some pharmacies.



Thanks, sis. This is real important. Do they get sick from the vaccine needle?



Nah, sis. Maybe a sore arm for a bit, but this Gardasil 9 needle has been given to kids for a long time now and it gets checked regularly in Australia to make sure it's still safe. They'll be right.



Looks like we got homework to do! Awkward yarn about *sexy times*, HPV and cancer, **sign the consent**, and get the kids ready for their needle.

FACT

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) checks the safety and quality of vaccines before they can be used in Australia. The TGA monitors vaccines for safety after they are supplied in Australia.

FACT

Common side effects include pain, swelling, redness, bruise around needle site in arm. Sometimes headache, tired, fever or dizzy. **Serious side effects are extremely rare.** The staff who give vaccines are trained to deal with them if they should occur.

An illustration of three people in a kitchen. On the left, a woman with long dark hair and a blue shirt. In the center, a woman with short brown hair in a bun, wearing a yellow shirt and a brown skirt, holding a white mug. On the right, a man with glasses and an orange shirt, also holding a white mug. They are all smiling. The background shows a kitchen with a white tiled wall, a black range hood, and blue cabinets. A yellow vertical bar is on the far left.

Well, lucky we came here
for a yarn today. You may
have saved Dylan's life, sis!

Nah, brother.
You will be
saving Dylan's
life when you
make sure he
gets the needle.

**We need to keep yarning about this
to other parents and carers to get
our kids protected from HPV and the
cancers it can cause.**

Thanks, sis. You're the best!

Resources

For more information about HPV, Gardasil 9, HPV related cancers, follow the links below, yarn with your AMS staff and check with your children's school.



Your Cervical Screening Test (CST)
Preventing cervical cancer.
WA Cervical Cancer Prevention Program



Samantha's story
– Surviving HPV related cancer



Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and cancer
Cancer Council Western Australia



Cervical cancer.
Cancer Council Western Australia



National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS)



HPV vaccine information
Healthy WA



Vaccines overview
Therapeutic Goods Administration



Human papillomavirus
WA Department of Health (DOH)



Sharing Knowledge About Immunisation (SKAI)- Adolescent vaccinations.

HPV is **Human Papillomavirus**.

There are lots of different types.

There is **often no signs** you have HPV.

Many people's immune systems will naturally clear the HPV.

Some **HPV can lead to warts or cancers** of the mouth, throat, cervix, and genitals.

HPV is spread easily through the skin during sexual contact.

Condoms alone are not enough to protect from HPV

Gardasil 9 is the vaccine

that protects you from the HPV types that cause cancer .

Early protection is best,

given at 12-13 years .

Catch up vaccination is advised if missed at this age.

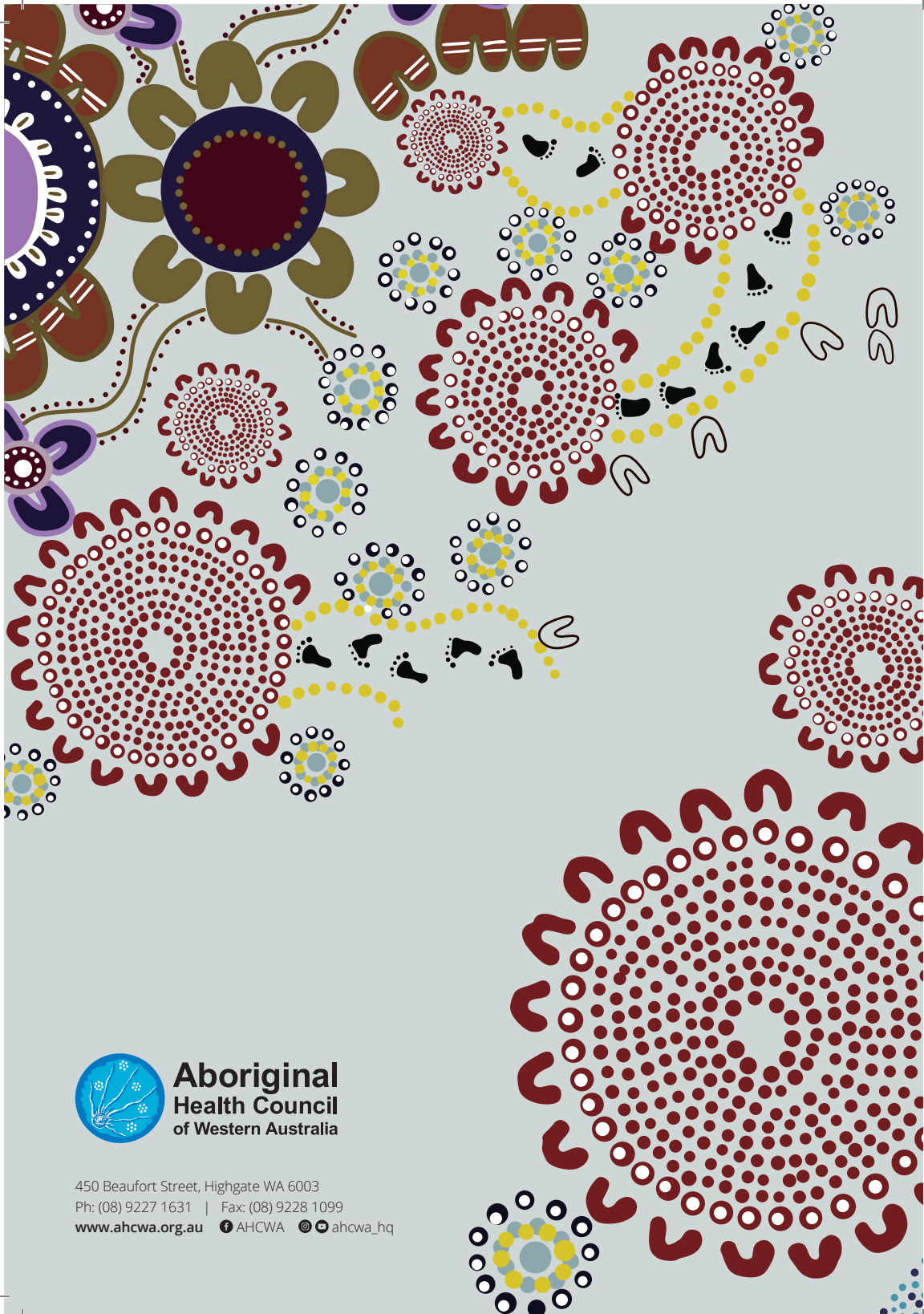
It's **only one needle**.

It's **free for 12-25 years of age**.

Get it at easily at school, doctor's clinic, AMS, and some pharmacies.







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