

kat's guide to precure



every single precure up to **hugtto precure**. NOT up to date with the current season as of writing, which is **star twinkle precure**. there are a lot of them, i know.

as a result of me constantly rambling about it, i get asked "what is precure?" a lot. before i get into that though, here's a quick history of magical girls to understand precure better:

a brief history of the magical girl genre

the magical girl genre has its roots in anime from as far back as the 1960s, but what popularized the genre was **sailor moon** in 1991. you probably know of sailor moon, as it's known almost worldwide. while most magical girl series before it mostly focused on a "cute witch" concept of little girl characters being given (or already having) magic powers and using them in casual/domestic ways rather than fighting evil (such as **himitsu no akko-chan**, **sally the witch**, **magical angel creamy mami**, and more), **sailor moon** instead borrowed the concept of a "team of heroes who fight evil" from **super sentai**, a long-running tokusatsu series in japan (power rangers adapts footage from it, so basically think of it as "sailor moon borrowed the power rangers team idea"). essentially, **sailor moon**



revolutionized, revitalized, and popularized the then-dying magical girl genre, and remains a worldwide cultural icon to this day.

sailor moon's immense popularity spawned a plethora of clones such as **tokyo mew mew**, **wedding peach**, and more. other notable magical girl series are **cardcaptor sakura**, **princess tutu**, **ojamajo doremi**, and **puella magi madoka magica**. however, in 2004, a new series in the genre began with a concept that combined **sailor moon** with the action anime of the day:

what is precure

precure, short for **pretty cure**, is a long-running magical girl anime series and franchise in japan. it started in 2004 with **futari wa pretty cure**, and since then, there has been a new **precure** series airing every year for 48-50 episodes. yes, that's a lot. so far, there are 16 **precure** series, with the 16th currently airing. these include, in order from oldest to newest:

1. futari wa pretty cure (2004)
2. futari wa pretty cure max heart (2005)
3. futari wa pretty cure splash star (2006)
4. yes! precure 5 (2007)
5. yes! precure 5 gogo (2008)
6. fresh precure! (2009)
7. heartcatch precure! (2010)
8. suite precure♪ (2011)
9. smile precure! (2012)
10. dokidoki! precure (2013)
11. happinesscharge precure! (2014)
12. go! princess precure (2015)
13. mahoutsukai precure! (2016)
14. kirakira precure a la mode (2017)
15. hugtto! precure (2018)
16. star☆twinkle precure (2019)

a commonly asked question is "*do i have to start from the beginning?*", and the answer to that is *no*, you can start **precure** from ANY season, as all are self-contained isolated seasons. the exceptions to this are **futari wa pretty cure max heart** and **yes pretty cure 5 gogo**, which are sequels to the seasons **futari wa pretty cure** and **yes pretty cure 5**, respectively.

precure is a series mainly targeted towards little girls in japan (ages 1-5 years old), however it can be enjoyed by any age group. while many magical girl animes cater towards an older male demographic by including a lot of fanservice (panty shots, ecchi, gross stuff), **precure** has no fanservice to keep the target audience aimed at little girls. it has also been dubbed and aired in different countries around the world, however, it has never been dubbed OR subbed into english in an unedited form (more on edited forms later).

a season typically starts with the leader of the cures, the pink cure, being given magical powers by a fairy. a fairy is usually a small plush-like animal from another world who arrives to earth requesting help fighting an evil that is attacking their home, OR trying to attack earth. the rest of the team of cures is introduced over the next 3-5 episodes and given powers to transform (the way they gain powers varies each season), with special "6th ranger cures" (a term referring to the 6th member of a power ranger team that comes later in the season, appropriated by the **precure** fandom for mid-season cures) joining the team in the middle of the season. the main format is "monster of the week", where a villain summons a monster by, depending on the season, corrupting a minor character or using surrounding objects. the cures then must transform from their civilian forms to their magical girl **precure** forms and defeat the monster, first by fighting physically (more on that later) and eventually finishing with a final attack. these attacks get stronger and stronger over the season as the cures gain new power-ups and items that aid them in their fights. the last 10 episodes build up to the cures' final fight against the main villain of the season, where they ultimately come out victorious.

where to watch precure



here's where it gets complicated. unfortunately, there is **no legal way to watch precure in its original, unedited form, subbed or dubbed**. the only exception to this is **futari wa pretty cure**, which has legal english subs on crunchyroll, however these are of extremely low quality and aren't recommended to watch. otherwise, the only way to watch **precure** is through fansubs, be it directly from the subbers themselves through torrents (which is how i watch it) or from reuploads of those fansubs on third party illegal anime streaming sites (which is what i assume how most people watch anime). i don't use these sites anymore so i can't recommend them, but if i am forced to use one, i usually stick to **9anime.to**. if you choose to use these websites, PLEASE make sure you have proper protection with adblock to prevent dangerous malware from downloading onto your computer through ads. i recommend *ublock origin*, as it's low on cpu usage, runs fast, and blocks any and all kinds of ads.

crunchyroll's poster for **futari wa pretty cure**.



the spawn of the devil

if you saw the image on the first page (or the image above) and thought, "this looks familiar", chances are you have seen **precure** in another form. there isn't a way to watch **precure** in its *unedited* form legally, however, there have been a total of three english dubs for three different **precure** series. the first is for **futari wa pretty cure**, which received a canadian english dub in 2009. this dub is edited with character names and cultural references changed to remove the original japanese names and culture, as well as a different english soundtrack. however, the form you've likely seen **precure** in is on netflix as **glitter force**. there have been two dubs done under this name, one of **smile precure** and one of **dokidoki precure**, under the names **glitter force** and **glitter force: doki-doki** respectively. these dubs are HEAVILY americanized, with names changed, scripts rewritten, and even animation edits done to remove any and all japanese cultural references. while **glitter force** alone is a decent children's series (from what i've heard), it is NOT a good introduction to **precure**.

where to start

there are five common methods to start with **precure** that most of the fandom use to recommend it to newcomers:

1. start with **heartcatch precure** (a fan favorite, considered the best of the franchise)
2. start with **go princess precure** (also a fan favorite, considered right behind **heartcatch** as the second best of the franchise)
3. start with **futari wa pretty cure** (the beginning of the franchise, a good starting point if you want to watch in order)
4. start with the **currently airing season** (at the time of writing, **star twinkle precure**)
5. find an image of EVERY SINGLE **precure**, pick the character you like the most, and watch the season they're from (a bit risky, but good for indecisive people)

why you should watch

precure is a wholesome, charming franchise with likeable characters, complex storylines, strong moral lessons, and much more. it's often belittled and dismissed for being a children's series, but even with that designation, it's definitely a series that can be enjoyed by all ages and demographics. while each season has its own messages and lessons, the franchise as a whole promotes themes of justice, forgiveness, friendship, tolerance, and acceptance, with certain seasons tackling deeper themes such as racism, sexism, grief, dystopia, terrorism, questioning gender identity, and more. **precure** in recent years has also promoted LGBTQ+ positivity, with **cure macaron** (on the right) and **cure chocolat** (on the left) from **kirakira precure a la mode** (as depicted in the image to the right) being in a subtext relationship. **hugtto precure** also features a gender non-conforming character in a subtext relationship with another character.



to a lesser extent, **precure** is notable for its focus on friendship rather than romance. romance is a staple in most magical girl anime, but **precure** tends to focus on the strong bond and friendship between the cures and their friends instead. while romance HAS been in the franchise, it's often downplayed to emphasize the friendship and bonds of the cast. it's a unique take on relationships in the genre, as romance is often highlighted over the magical girls' connection and bond.

also of importance is **precure**'s INCREDIBLE animation. while **precure** does go off model at times (often to hilarious results), it's well known for its astonishing fight scenes. rather than the cures relying on only their weapons to fight the enemy, they instead fight using physical combat along with their weapons (with the exception of **kirakira precure a la mode**, which unfortunately has no physical combat fighting). **precure** is infamous for its brutal fight scenes, where the cures defeat their enemies by beating them with their fists. yes, their FISTS. notable fight scenes include:

1. cure flora's first attack in episode one of **go princess precure**, where she defeats the monster of the week in an incredibly well animated sequence.
2. cure moonlight's debut transformation attack and victory in **heartcatch precure**, in which she singlehandedly defeats *all three of the season's main villains*. it's incredibly satisfying to watch.
3. cure peach's fight against eas, one of the early villains in **fresh precure**. while the series has mixed reception, this fight is highly regarded as one of the best in the franchise for being both emotionally charged and well animated.
4. cure yell's battle against the monster in the first episode of **hugtto precure**, considered to be one of the best fight scenes in the season, as well as what brought a lot of attention to the season from anime fans outside the fandom while the season was still airing.

frequently asked questions

QUESTION: are there movies?

ANSWER: there are two movies for each season every year: one season-specific movie, and one **all-stars** movie, which is a series of movies where EVERY season crosses over and teams up to fight a common enemy. in recent years this has been capped to the three most recent teams due to the amount of teams, but all previous **all-stars** movies retain the original concept. as of writing, there are 15 season-specific movies, and there are 12 **all-stars** movies, with another one slated for release in the next few months.

the **all-stars** series has two trilogies, the **dx** series and the **new stage** series. after that, each movie is different. all of the cures remember each other from the previous movie, with each new movie serving to introduce the latest team to everyone else and leading up to them fighting together.



my current magical girl merchandise collection, mostly consisting of **precure** toys and merchandise. doesn't include **precure** merchandise in my magical girl themed ita bag. i'm flexing here, obviously

QUESTION: is there merch/toys? where can i buy them?

ANSWER: the franchise is meant to sell toys and merch, so there is a LOT of it, mostly targeted towards the main demographic of little girls. this includes fashion/apparel, stationary, party supplies, costumes, keychains, figures, and a LOT more. there are toys for almost every weapon in the series, as well as dolls and plushies.

as **precure** isn't promoted in the west, the best way for a western fan to buy **precure** merchandise is through second-hand store websites based in japan such as **mandarake**, **yahoo japan auctions**,

otamart, and more. another good method is shopping through western second hand shops like **mercari**, **depop**, and more, but the inventory isn't as good as the japanese stores mentioned above.

QUESTION: is it like puella magi madoka magica? does it go dark/show gore?

ANSWER: madoka magica shook up the scene with its darker take and subversion of common tropes and themes of the genre in 2011, which triggered a large amount of similar series in the next decade attempting to emulate its success by being dark, gorey, edgy, and more. despite this, **precure** has stuck to being an all-ages series, remaining one of the only magical girl series in recent years to stick to the genre's core themes of positivity and fun. while the franchise has never been afraid to depict darker and depressing themes and subjects, it has never explicitly depicted gore or blood in the series, with the only exception being a brief moment of cure heart shedding blood in the **dokidoki precure** season-specific movie.

conclusion



the magical girl genre as a whole is often disrespected and dismissed by most casual anime fans in the west, seeing it as "childish" and "basic", and is only accepted when the very tropes that make up the genre are subverted and flipped. **precure** is a franchise that embraces the magical girl genre and its children's show image, while also providing deep social commentary and teaching strong, valuable lessons to its viewers with its powerful storylines and well developed characters. even with the daunting length of the seasons, both episode and series wise, it's still a highly enjoyable series that can be loved and appreciated by anyone of any age.

written october 24, 2019 by melodicake