

VACCINATION

Vaccination is an effective measure, which prevents any infections caused by the frequent and dangerous carcinogenic types of the virus as well as the development of pathological cells.

Who and when they should be vaccinated?

Routine vaccination with HPV vaccine is recommended for all 11- and 12-year-old boys and girls. The vaccine can also be given beginning at age 9 or 10 years.

If a boy or a girl did not receive the two doses of vaccine at the recommended age, they should still start or complete their HPV vaccine series.

Vaccination is routinely recommended through the age of 26 for all males and females, and can be given through age 45 years, if desired.

If the vaccine series is started before the 15th birthday, two doses are needed. If it is started at age 15 years or older or, if the person has problems with their immune system, three doses are necessary.

In Cyprus, the HPV vaccination is provided free of charge by the National Health Insurance System - GESY, to girls born from 01/01/2004 and to boys born from 01/01/2008.

What women who are vaccinated should know?

Women who are vaccinated should continue preventive and diagnostic tests, because the vaccine does not provide protection against all types of the virus.

What men who are vaccinated should know?

The vaccination is provided in intramuscular injections and does not provide protection against all types of the virus. Vaccination can protect them from cancers like penile, anus, oropharynx and genital warts, protecting their future partners as well. At the same time, the transmission chain stops.

Frequent population screening with Pap test for women and vaccination for men, women and children, provide the most effective protection from cervical cancer.

Why vaccinate preteens and teens against HPV?

HPV vaccine produces better immunity to fight infection when given to preteens as compared to older adolescents and adults.

For HPV vaccine to work best, it is very important for preteens to get all the recommended doses before any sexual activity begins.

It is possible to get infected with HPV the very first time they have sexual contact with another person, even if they do not have intercourse.

Most men and women will contract at least one type of HPV virus in their lifetime. Vaccination can reduce their risk of HPV infection.

Most people who become infected with HPV do not even know it.

HPV is easily spread by skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity. Even if someone does not have sexual intercourse, they can still get HPV.

People who have only one lifetime sex partner can still get HPV if their partner had intimate contact with an infected person even once.

The vaccine has been tested in tens of thousands of people around the world and has been proven to have no serious side effects except fainting, which is more likely to occur in adolescents after any vaccination. Like other vaccinations, most side effects from HPV vaccination are mild (e.g., fever, headache, pain and redness in the arm where the shot was given).

HPV vaccination can prevent more than 90% of HPV-attributable cancers in men and women in the future.

Together in Life

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

The campaign is supported by:

- The Cyprus Gynaecological and Obstetrics Society
- The Cyprus Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology
- The Cyprus Pediatric Society
- The Oncology society of Cyprus
- The Cyprus Society of Dermatology and Venereology

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HUMAN PAPILLOMA VIRUS Cancers

Prevent these cancers

by vaccination
and Pap smear test.



Both **MEN** and **WOMEN** can be carriers of the HPV virus which can lead to cancer and genital and anal warts.

Vaccination against HPV can be carried out usually at the ages

between
9 and 14

for both
BOYS and **GIRLS**

and Gesy offers it free

Talk to your healthcare provider
today about

PROTECTING YOURSELF
from HPV infection!

01

What do we know about HPV CANCERS?

What is HPV?

Human papilloma virus (HPV) is a common family of viruses. There are more than 100 types of HPV viruses. Some cause infection of the skin and others infect mucous membranes of various areas of the body. Different types of HPV infection affect the body in different ways.

For instance, at least 14 types of HPV, which are characterized as 'high risk' can lead to cancer of the tongue, tonsils, anus, cervix, vulva, and penis, and others cause warts in the genital area.

How common is HPV?

HPV is very common. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), most men and women will contract at least one type of HPV virus during their lifetime. HPV is the cause of almost all cervical cancers in women and recent studies show that HPV is associated with the majority (70%) of oropharyngeal cancers (cancer of the tongue or tonsils), which occur primarily in men.

How serious is HPV?

HPV is extremely serious.

Which are the complications of the HPV infection?

In case the infection does not disappear on its own, it can lead to the creation of cervical cancer or other types of cancer (e.g. vulva cancer, vaginal cancer, anal cancer, and penile cancer as well as some types of cancer of the head and neck), genital and anal warts.

How is HPV spread?

The most common ways to get an HPV infection is from oral, vaginal, or anal sex with an infected person. Infection can also be acquired from skin-to-skin contact with areas infected by HPV. It is possible to have HPV and not know it, so a person can unknowingly spread HPV to another person.

Does the condom protect you from the virus?

The use of a condom does not completely exclude the risk of transmission of the virus. This happens because in some cases the surrounding skin that is not protected by the condom may be infected by HPV.

02

RISK FACTORS

- ✓ Becoming sexually active at a young age (especially younger than 18 years old)
- ✓ Having many sexual partners
- ✓ Having one partner who is considered high risk (someone with HPV infection or who has many sexual partners)

03

TREATMENT

There is no treatment for HPV infection. Fortunately, the body usually fights off the virus naturally; however, in cases where the virus cannot be fought off naturally, the person is at risk for serious complications, including cancer.

There are treatments available for the health problems that HPV can cause, for example, removal of genital warts or pre-cancerous cervical cells, and chemotherapy, surgery, or radiation for cancer.

04

PREVENTION

PAP TEST/ PAP SMEAR

Pap test is a quick and simple examination, which is used for the control of the changes that occur on the cells of the uterus, which can lead in the creation of cervical cancer.

The test provides the gynecologist with the opportunity to carry out a more specialized check such as colposcopy and taking biopsies from the cervix pain-free.

It is recommended that women start getting Pap test once becoming sexually active, unless their gynecologist determines a different frequency of the test, even if they have been vaccinated.

In cases where the Pap test results present "atypical cells of undetermined significance", the gynecologist might recommend the diagnostic examination HPV DNA test, which can provide the gynecologist with important information on how to handle each circumstance.