



FREE CERVICAL CANCER VACCINE.

Protecting yourself from the most common causes of cervical cancer requires 3 injections, in the arm, all given within 6 months.

If you haven't had all your doses, contact your doctor, practice nurse or health clinic now to make an appointment.

It
takes
Three

What is cervical cancer?

- It's cancer of the cervix, which is the lower part of the uterus or womb.
- It's caused by a common virus called human papillomavirus (HPV), which most people come into contact with at some stage during their lives.
- There are usually no obvious symptoms with HPV infections.
- Most HPV infections clear naturally and don't develop into cervical cancer, but if abnormal cells occur and go untreated, cervical cancer can result.

Why vaccinate?

- More than 99% of cervical cancer is linked to HPV infections.
- Every year in New Zealand about 160 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and 60 die from it.
- The vaccine causes the body's immune system to produce its own protection (antibodies) against the HPV types that cause most cervical cancers.
- Getting vaccinated before exposure to these HPV types provides protection against developing most types of cervical cancers.
- In the long term more than 30 lives may be saved every year.

How do I get the vaccine?

- Make an appointment with your doctor, practice nurse, or health service.
- The vaccine is given as three injections in the upper arm over a six-month period.

Do my parents or guardians need to give consent?

- While you are encouraged to discuss the vaccination with your parents or guardians, you can get vaccinated without their consent if the health professional is sure you fully understand all the risks and benefits.
- If you are going to be vaccinated at school (from 2009) and are aged 16 or over, you can give your own consent. You will still need to sign and return the consent form.

Should I be vaccinated if I have already had sexual contact?

- Yes. You may still benefit from the vaccine as there's a chance you won't have been infected with both of the two HPV types that cause 7 out of 10 cervical cancers.

If vaccinated, will I still need to have cervical smear tests?

Yes. The vaccine doesn't protect against all HPV types that cause cervical cancer, so once sexually active you still need to have a smear test every three years between the ages of 20 and 70.

For more information, check out www.cervicalcancervaccine.govt.nz or phone 0800 IMMUNE (0800 466 863)

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