



Dear Parent/Carer

## **Beating cervical cancer**

The HPV vaccine is being offered to all 12 and 13-year-old girls in school Year 8, starting in September 2017.

The Childhood Immunisation Team has gone digital. Please follow this link to complete the HPV consent form for your daughter:

**<https://onlineforms.hdft.nhs.uk/childhoodimmunisations>**

(Please note this form CAN be completed on smart phones and tablets)

The vaccine to protect against cervical cancer is being offered to your daughter in school when she starts Year 8. By having this vaccination, your daughter will be protected against the commonest cause of cervical cancer. There are two vaccinations to be given six months apart; the first will be given in the autumn term 2017 and the second in summer 2018. **If for any reason your daughter is absent from school on a vaccination day please contact the immunisation team on the above number regarding any vaccinations your daughter may have missed.**

If you would like more details, you can order or download a Q&A information sheet that should answer any questions, this is available on :

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vaccinations/Pages/hpv-human-papillomavirus-vaccine.aspx>

Where you can also find a scientific factsheet on the virus, the disease and the vaccine.

At the bottom of this email, there is some basic introductory information about the virus and the vaccination, which we hope you will find useful. Early vaccination will give us the opportunity of helping to prevent the spread of a very serious disease that affects over 3,000 women every year in the UK and causes over 1,000 deaths.

We hope that the information provided addresses any concerns you or your daughter might have about the vaccination and that you will both feel confident that by having the HPV vaccine she will be protecting herself and others from a very serious disease later in life.

If you have any questions regarding this or you believe your child's vaccination status is not up to date (including MMR) please contact your Childhood Immunisation team on the above number.

Yours sincerely,

**Lois Alderson**  
Childhood Immunisation Coordinator

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## **Beating cervical cancer –HPV vaccine**

### **What is cervical cancer?**

Cervical cancer affects the cervix (the entrance to the womb). It can be caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV), which is spread from one person to another during sexual activity. There are over 100 types of HPV but only thirteen of these cause cervical cancer and just four – types 6, 11, 16 and 18 – cause over 70% of the cases.

### **What is the HPV vaccine?**

The HPV vaccine stops the human papilloma virus from developing in the body and so prevents cervical cancer (in 70% of the cases).

### **Why does my daughter have to have the vaccine at 12 or 13 years of age?**

The virus that causes cervical cancer is spread by someone having sex, or being sexually intimate with another person who has the virus. Both men and women can become infected with this virus. Whilst most girls don't start having sex until they are 16 or quite a bit older, it has been shown that the vaccine provides the best protection if it is given at 12 to 13 years of age. Because the virus is so common, and the vaccine won't work against the cancer-causing types 6, 11, 16 and 18 if they are already in the body, postponing the vaccination until after sexual activity has started would mean that a young woman may not be protected and could therefore become infected with the cancer-causing virus.

### **Why can't her older sister be vaccinated too?**

There was a catch-up programme for older girls in 2009 for 17 and 18 year olds, (school years 12 and 13) and 15 and 16 year olds, (school years 10 and 11), so that by the end of the school year in summer 2010 all girls leaving school would have been protected against the most likely cause of cervical cancer.

### **What if she doesn't want to have the vaccination?**

She doesn't have to have it, if she doesn't want to, but it is recommended that she does have it for the reasons given above. Having the vaccination now will protect her for many years. Suggest she speaks to the nurse or doctor if she wants more information, on her own, or with you, if she'd prefer.

### **What if she wants the vaccination but, as her parents, we'd rather she didn't have it?**

You should discuss this with your doctor or nurse to get more advice. The decision is legally hers as long as she understands the issues in giving consent but the nurse would much rather have your permission as well. It is important for your daughter's future to appreciate that having the vaccination now will protect her from the most common cause of cervical cancer for many years to come.

### **Why has the number of doses of HPV vaccine changed?**

From September 2014 the number of doses of HPV vaccine that is to be given to teenage girls aged 12-13 years will be reduced from three to two because it's been shown that two doses with a minimum interval of 6 months provides the same level of protection as a 3 dose schedule. The first dose will be given to Year 8 girls in Autumn 2015 with the second dose 6 months later. The vaccine used is Gardasil.