

About Cervical Cancer

- Here in Britain, about 3000 women develop cervical cancer every year and 1/3 of these die from the disease.
- Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer worldwide in women under 40
- Cervical cancer is usually caused by human papillomavirus (known as HPV) usually caught in the late teens or early twenties.
- The virus is transmitted through intimate skin to skin genital contact and spreads readily even without full sexual intercourse.
- The virus is common and highly contagious – around 75% of all women who are sexually active are infected at some stage. In most cases the body's own immune system is able to eradicate HPV before it causes disease
- But some types of HPV can cause cervical cancer, some genital warts whilst others cause no disease at all
- If a woman has ever had a sexual relationship she may have been infected – whatever her age.

“Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer worldwide in women under 40”

Vaccination Protection

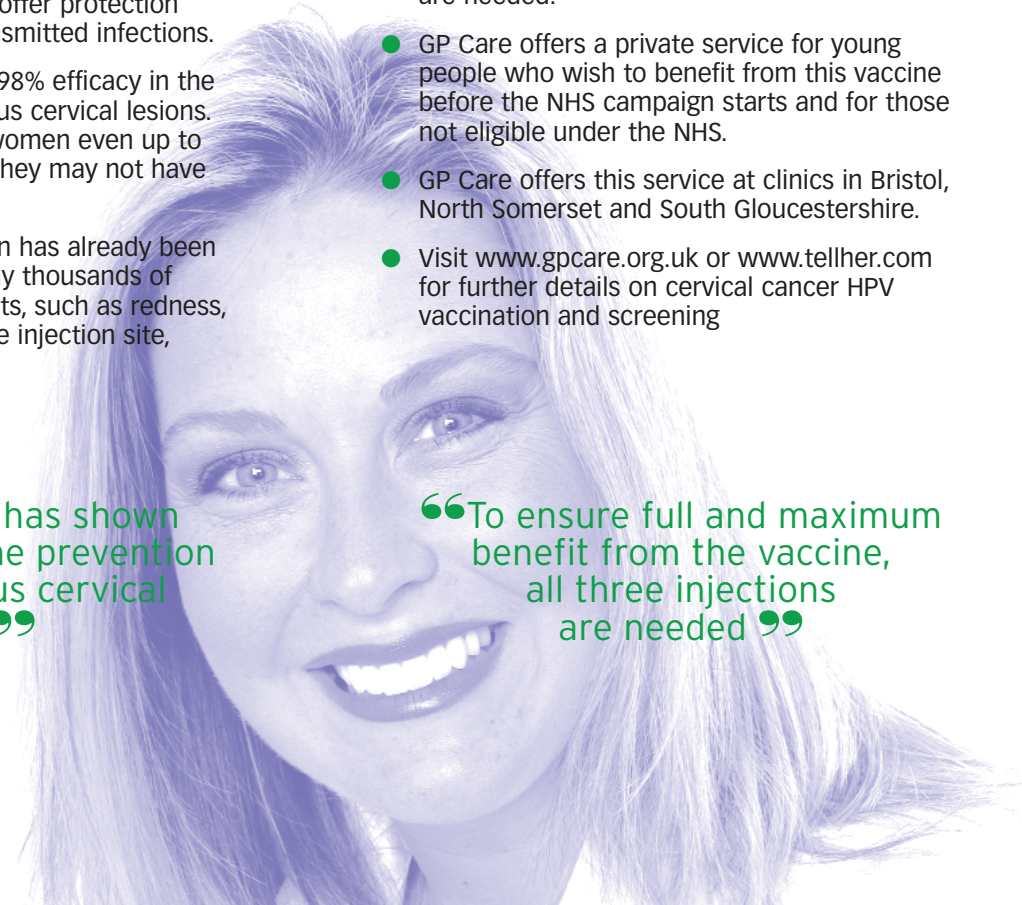
- Vaccine has recently become available offering almost 100% protection against HPV
- The vaccine also offers protection against genital warts and other genital diseases
- While offering protection against the four most common strains that can cause cervical cancer, it does not offer protection against all the cancer-causing types or cure an existing HPV infection. For your safety, cervical smears are still required.
- HPV vaccination does not offer protection against other sexually transmitted infections.
- Clinical trials have shown 98% efficacy in the prevention of pre-cancerous cervical lesions. Protection is afforded to women even up to the age of 25 or more as they may not have contracted the virus.
- Cervical cancer vaccination has already been tested successfully in many thousands of women and any side effects, such as redness, swelling or mild pain at the injection site, usually go away quickly.

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Vaccination Programme

- The Department of Health plans to run a national campaign for 12-13 year old girls starting in September 2008 and up to aged 16 in autumn 2009 through the NHS. The vaccine will not be available through the NHS before this and there are no current plans to extend the programme to other age groups.
- Three vaccinations are needed in total – an initial injection followed by two more over the next six months. To ensure full and maximum benefit from the vaccine, all three injections are needed.
- GP Care offers a private service for young people who wish to benefit from this vaccine before the NHS campaign starts and for those not eligible under the NHS.
- GP Care offers this service at clinics in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.
- Visit www.gpcare.org.uk or www.tellher.com for further details on cervical cancer HPV vaccination and screening

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Living a healthy lifestyle

Sexual health should be considered alongside other aspects of a healthy lifestyle. From the age of 25 onwards, make sure your cervical smear is up to date with your own GP or practice nurse. Abnormal smears are common, do not mean cancer is certain to form but do need follow up and treatment in some cases.

Using condoms helps in practicing safe sex, although even they cannot guarantee protection against HPV infection. HPV can be caught even without full penetrative sex as it is found on the skin around the genital area.

It is impossible to know who carries HPV as it has no symptoms so it is possible to catch HPV from your first sexual experience. Any infected person can pass it on. Obviously, a greater number of sexual partners increases the risk of HPV infection.

Smoking can suppress the body's immune system making it harder to fight off infections including HPV. So smoking also increases your risk of developing cervical cancer as well as the other risks it carries.

If you have any further questions about any other aspect of HPV, cervical cancer, vaccination or cervical screening, please ask your doctor or nurse.

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GP Care

GP Care offers a vaccination service in Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset for those wishing to protect themselves against the human papillomavirus, HPV.

Further information can be obtained from the following websites

www.gpcare.org.uk

www.tellher.com



GP Care LLP
Christchurch Medical Centre
North Street,
Downend,
Bristol. BS16 5SG

Tel: 0117 970 8983
Fax: 0117 956 2224

E-mail: Info@gpcare.org.uk
Partnership Number: OC315695

“Visit www.gpcare.org.uk
or www.tellher.com
for further details”

Protecting yourself against Cervical Cancer

Information for patients

