



## Cervical cancer - can it be prevented ?

Cervical cancer or cancer of the cervix is not hereditary. It ranks as the first most frequent cancer among women in India. It can affect women between 15 and 44 years of age. It is caused by certain types of common virus called Human Papilloma virus (HPV) – which causes infection of the cervix.

Cervix is that part of the uterus which is also called as the month of the uterus part of it is in vagina. It acts as a checkpoint i.e. prevents infections from reaching the uterus. HPV is a common virus and gets transmitted through contact of genital area through sexual intercourse or sexual contact. It can affect a woman while she is still young. Out of approx. 100 types of HPV, 30 types can affect the genital area. It can affect both, men and women. Most of the times, HPV infection does not produce any signs or symptoms and so. The infection is harboured without getting treated and also can be passed on!

It is possible to prevent the HPV infection through vaccination. As every woman is at risk of getting cervical cancer, it is best to protect her through vaccination at an early age!

Vaccination produces antibodies against the HPV which protect the body against the infection when it attacks in turn preventing the occurrence of cervical cancer.

But women who are sexually active can also get benefitted from the vaccine.

### How should take the vaccine ?

Best given to adolescent girls as this is when the best immune response to the vaccine is achieved. Ideally the vaccine should be given before the first sexual contact. Regular PAP smear test and vaccine should be the combination as the PAP smear can find early cervical changes when they are still treatable and can prevent the occurrence of cervical cancer.

**SCHEDULE:** The vaccine is given in 3 doses in the form of injections over a period of 6 months.

There are two vaccines available in the market.

Are treatable and still prevent the cervical cancer.

**SAFETY AND SIDE EFFECTS:** Vaccines are extremely safe. Most common side effects are redness and soreness at the injection site. Mild fever and headaches may also occur which get relieved by simple medication!\

Ask your doctor TODAY about vaccination against cervical cancer.