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Gardasil® - A New Vaccine for the Human Papillomavirus

What is HPV?

The human papillomavirus (HPV) is a sexually transmitted disease that affects many women in the United States. It is estimated that 50% of all sexually active individuals become infected with HPV at some point. (1) There are many different types of HPV. In fact, there are 180 different types of HPV; with about 18 of 120 types of HPV being associated with cancer. HPV is associated with 99% of cervical cancer cases. (2) Cervical cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women with 233,000 deaths occurring worldwide each year. (1)

What does Gardasil protect against?

Gardasil is a new vaccine that was just recently approved by the FDA in June. This is the first vaccine that was approved to

protect against certain strains of the HPV virus. Specifically, it protects against HPV types 16 and 18 which have been implicated in over 70% of all cervical cancers and HPV types 6 and 11 which have been implicated in genital warts. (1,2)

Who should think about getting the Gardasil Vaccine?

This vaccine is approved for females between the ages of 9-26 for the prevention of cervical cancer, genital warts, and precancerous lesions. It is being recommended that this vaccine be given to pre-adolescent females at age 11 or 12. Although, it is usually females that get HPV related cancer; men are still susceptible to genital and rectal warts. Gardasil has not yet been approved for males but research is currently being done in this area. (3,4)

Is Gardasil effective?

In the clinical trials done on this vaccine it has been shown to be very effective. This vaccine appears to be 100% effective at preventing HPV types 16 and 18 strains (implicated in cervical cancer) and 99% effective at protecting against HPV types 6 and 11 strains (implicated in genital warts). (1,3)

It is important to note that this vaccine is more effective when given to females before they become sexually active. Also, this vaccine can only prevent certain strains of HPV not treat HPV infections in females. (4)

In order for this vaccine to be fully effective it is recommended that Gardasil be given in three doses over six months. The second dose should be given two months after the first and the

third dose should be given six months after the first dose. It is unsure how long the vaccine is effective for. It has been shown to be effective at preventing the virus for at least four years but only the future will tell how long this vaccination is effective for.(3)

Is Gardasil safe?

Gardasil has been shown to be safe. The most common side effects from this vaccine are pain, redness, or swelling at the injection. Some people might also experience a fever from this vaccine.

References

1. Karpa D, Kelly. First Cancer Vaccine Approved for Women. Drug Topics. July 24, 2006; pg. 13
2. Warner, Jennifer. (2003). Viral Infections Increasingly Implicated in Cancer Growth and Development. <http://www.webmd.com/content/article/78/95750.htm> (10 Dec. 2003).DeNoon, Daniel. (2006). Cervical
3. Cancer Vaccine Approved. <http://www.webmd.com/content/Article/123/110599.htm> (08 Jun. 2006).
4. Zwillich, Todd. (2006). Panel: HPV Vaccine for Young Girls. <http://www.webmd.com/content/Article/124/115641.htm> (29 Jun. 2006).

Specialty Medicine Compounding Pharmacy

The demands of modern compounding have led to the creation of pharmacies devoted solely to this art. Specialty Medicine Compounding Pharmacy has been serving your community for over six years. Here we specialize in bio-identical

hormone replacement therapies and veterinary medicine, to name a few. We have all the facilities and equipment needed to make anything from topicals to capsules and sterile injectables. We do not accept insurance, but do provide claim

forms with prescriptions we fill. So, next time a patient wants a compound you're unsure of - we'd be happy to serve them!



Kenny Walkup, RPh has attended training classes through the American Pharmaceutical Association to give flu shots. Specialty Medicine is a Medicare provider and biller for flu shots for Medicare recipients.