

## Cervical cancer and HPV - the facts



Cervical cancer is the growth of abnormal cells in the lining of the cervix.



Approximately **800 women in Australia** are diagnosed with cervical cancer every year.



Cervical cancer accounts for about **2 out of 100 of all cancers** diagnosed in women.



Cervical cancer in Australia has **decreased significantly** since a national screening program was started in the 1990s.

### National HPV Vaccination Program



- Genital Human Papillomavirus (**HPV**) is a very common sexually transmitted infection which usually causes no symptoms and goes away by itself. However, HPV is responsible for almost all cases of genital warts and cervical cancer.<sup>1</sup>



- The **HPV vaccine provides protection against two strains of HPV**, 16 and 18, that are known to cause 70-80% of cervical cancers. The vaccine also offers some protection against other less common cancers associated with HPV.



- Australia was the first country to introduce a free national HPV vaccination program, beginning first with girls in 2007 and expanding to boys in 2013.<sup>2</sup>

### Screening test for cervical cancer



- For several decades, the Pap test has been used as a screening test for cervical cancer. While this has helped decrease cervical cancer significantly, scientific evidence has found that screening women for HPV is a more effective way of preventing cervical cancer.

### Did you know?



- Quitting smoking or reducing exposure to passive smoking can decrease the likelihood of developing cervical cancer. Chemicals in tobacco can damage the cells of the cervix, making cancer more likely to develop in women with HPV.



- The immune system helps rid the body of HPV. Women with a weakened immune system are at an increased risk of developing cervical cancer.



- Research has shown that women who have taken the pill for five years or more are at increased risk of developing cervical cancer.



- Most HPV infections are asymptomatic. It is estimated that up to four out of five Australians will have an HPV infection at some point in their lives.<sup>3</sup>

[www.rcpa.edu.au](http://www.rcpa.edu.au)

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Sources:

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.cancer.org.au/content/about\\_cancer/ebooks/Understanding\\_Cervical\\_Cancer\\_booklet\\_September\\_2017.pdf#\\_ga=2.107771714.1990626576.1510525918-1769685335.1499746486](http://www.cancer.org.au/content/about_cancer/ebooks/Understanding_Cervical_Cancer_booklet_September_2017.pdf#_ga=2.107771714.1990626576.1510525918-1769685335.1499746486)

<sup>2</sup><http://www.hpvvaccine.org.au/teens/teens-what-is-hpv.aspx>

<sup>3</sup>[https://myaccount.news.com.au/theaustralian/subscribe?pk-gDef=TA\\_SDO\\_P0415A\\_W04&directSubscribe=true&b=true&sourceCode=TAWEB\\_WRE170\\_a\\_GGL&mode=premium&dest=http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/schoolkids-to-get-anticancer-vaccine/news-story/bdae779667e94b1e8da1ecc5faf6c4cf&memtype=anonymous](https://myaccount.news.com.au/theaustralian/subscribe?pk-gDef=TA_SDO_P0415A_W04&directSubscribe=true&b=true&sourceCode=TAWEB_WRE170_a_GGL&mode=premium&dest=http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/schoolkids-to-get-anticancer-vaccine/news-story/bdae779667e94b1e8da1ecc5faf6c4cf&memtype=anonymous)

<sup>4</sup><http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/content/immunise-hpv>