



# Human Papilloma Virus

## HPV Vaccines



The HPV vaccines protect against two of the most commonly associated viruses which have been clearly linked as a cause of cervical cancer. The vaccines are given to girls from about 10 years of age upwards to help protect against this disease which kills many women in Ireland every year. The vaccines seldom cause significant side-effects or illness but further information is available on the product information leaflet. Neither of the two available vaccines treat HPV infections so it is important to have the vaccine as early as possible.

## trying to decide which vaccine to have

When faced with a decision as to which would be the best HPV vaccine to choose for you or your child it can be very difficult to understand all the information which is available. You obviously want to make the right choice but it may all sound very confusing.

The cost of the vaccines is approximately the same when you spread it out over the 6 months so that perhaps is not the main decision most people face. The Cervarix vaccine costs €390 over 6 months and the Gardasil vaccine costs €480. This means Gardasil costs €30 more per dose.

The two vaccines both provide excellent protection against the main viruses which have been linked to cervical cancer. There is really nothing to separate the vaccines on this protection and so having either Cervarix or Gardasil is an excellent choice.

The Gardasil vaccine also has the added benefit of helping to protect against genital warts. These are a common and unpleasant social problem but they are very seldom linked to any risk of cancer. They are however very contagious and can spread quite easily from person to person with even mild genital contact.

Gardasil can also be given to boys and helps lessen their risk of developing genital warts and also may help reduce HPV transmission in the community.

Once you start a course with one of the vaccines you should complete it and not change as there is not enough evidence to suggest that the vaccines are interchangeable.