

HPV vaccination

Your daughter has reached an age (11-14 years) at which she can be vaccinated against Cervical Cancer. As there remain open questions concerning this vaccination, it is important to be well-informed before making a decision in favor or against this vaccination. To facilitate this for you, we would like to give a short impression of our point of view concerning this vaccination.

What is the vaccination protecting from?

Human Papilloma Viruses are the most important reason for the development of Cervical Cancer and its precursors, as well as they can cause genital warts at women and men. Mostly healing without complications, for a small part of infected people, the infections can lead to precursors of Cervical Cancer.

How can I get contracted with this disease?

HPVirus is highly contagious and sexually transmissible. Therefore the risk starts when entering sexual life: about 70% of sexual active people get infected with HPV during their life; the highest infection rates can be found among young adults from 15 to 24 years. ¹

Which is the best age to vaccinate?

The most reasonable age for the vaccination is before the first sexual contact, because at this time there hasn't been a possibility for infection with HPV.

The vaccination is approved for young women from 9 to 24 years, but an age between 11 and 12 is recommended.²

Nevertheless you have to know that so long there are few investigations on the long-term protection by these vaccines. It is assumed that the Protection through vaccine lasts at least 10 years, then a booster injection might be necessary. But the research concerning this subject is still in process.

Not only for this reason it is important to know that the HPV vaccination can not replace the regular preventive checkup at the gynecologist.

How often will my daughter be vaccinated?

Though there exists also the possibility to vaccinate only two times, we prefer the three-rate vaccination: First vaccination, then the second after one month, and the third six months after the first. The critical German medicaments magazine "Arznei-Telegramm" showed that by vaccinating only two times, the protective effect is affected negatively.³

Which vaccine do we recommend?

The two available vaccines are protecting only against 2 respectively 4 of the various Types of HPV. But as types 16 and 18 are responsible for more than 2/3 of all cervical cancers and its precursors, the protection from this two types reduces the risk considerably. In addition, a cross-immunity is possible, which means that immunization against the types mentioned above also helps the immune system to resist other types of HPV.¹

We recommend the immunization with the bivalent vaccine CERVARIX® which seems to have a slightly better long-term effect and to reduce better the total of malignant cellular alterations through HPV. On the other hand GARDASIL® seems to offer a better protection against the genital warts⁴. If there is an increased risk in your family for malignant diseases the HPV-vaccination should be considered as a preventive measure. In any case all pros and cons of the vaccination should be discussed in a visit in the doctor's office for pediatrics and teenage healthcare.

© Dr. Thorsten Faust, cand. med. Eleonora Radig 03.03.15

¹ <http://dgk.de/gesundheit/impfen-infektionskrankheiten/krankheiten-von-a-bis-z/humane-papillomviren-hpv/hpv-impfung.html>

² Arznei-Telegramm 2009 40:59

³ Arznei-Telegramm 2014 45:11

⁴ Arznei-Telegramm 2009 40:71-3