



Health and Human Services **MEDIA RELEASE**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



January 5, 2017

Prevent cervical cancer

HPV vaccine and regular screening can save lives

SARASOTA, FL – January is Cervical Health Awareness Month. The Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) and the Community Health Centers of Sarasota County remind families of males and females, starting at age nine, about the importance of getting the cancer prevention Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccination. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), cervical cancer can be one of the easiest gynecologic cancers to prevent, when combined with HPV vaccination, routine screening tests and follow-up.

Cervical cancer, or cancer starting in the cervix, is the 14th leading cause of cancer deaths among women in Florida. Nearly all cervical cancers are caused by Human Papillomavirus (HPV), which is commonly passed from one person to another during sexual activity.

DOH-Sarasota offers the HPV vaccine at its Sarasota and North Port locations. The vaccine is available at no cost to those 9 to 18 years of age through the federally-funded Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. Males and females ages 19 to 26 who have no insurance can get the vaccine for just the cost of the administration fee, through a special adult vaccine program.

According to the CDC, to reduce risk or prevent cervical cancer women should:

- Get the HPV vaccine between ages 9 and 26. CDC has recently revised their guidelines so only two doses of the vaccine are now required for those between 9 and 14 years of age. Those who are 15 to 26 years old will still need three doses of the vaccine for adequate protection from the virus.
- Women between 21 and 65 years old should see their doctor regularly for a Pap test
- Do not smoke
- Limit the number of sexual partners

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MEDIA NOTES:

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Completing all recommended doses of the HPV vaccination series can help prevent multiple cancers, including cervical cancer and cancer of the mouth and throat. “We actively promote HPV vaccine at our clinics,” says DOH-Sarasota Immunization Program Manager Donna Keith. “At one of our sites, the completion rate for all three doses of HPV vaccine is more than 50 percent, exceeding the national average by nearly 20 percentage points. We are working hard to reach that rate of completion at our other two sites as well.”

Two screening tests can help prevent cervical cancer or find it early:

- The Pap test (or Pap smear) looks for pre-cancers, cell changes on the cervix that might become cervical cancer if they are not treated appropriately.
- The HPV test looks for the virus that can cause these cell changes.

Talk to your health care provider about when a Pap test is most appropriate for you. Tests for specific HPV strains can support earlier diagnosis of cervical cancer. Women ages 50 to 64, who are uninsured and are at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level can receive Pap tests through the department’s Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program.

Visit these websites to learn more:

Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program: <http://sarasota.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/clinical-and-nutrition-services/breast-cervical-cancer-prevention/index.html>

HPV Vaccine: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/vaccines/hpv.html>

Immunization services and hours at DOH-Sarasota:

<http://sarasota.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/clinical-and-nutrition-services/immunizations/immunizations-adult.html>, or call 941-861-2784 in Sarasota and 941-861-3864 in North Port.

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About the Florida Department of Health

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View the complete policy at www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx

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