

2 May 2008

INTRODUCTION OF HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS VACCINE INTO THE NATIONAL IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME

Dear Colleague,

This letter provides information about the introduction of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine into the national immunisation programme. The new programme will start from the beginning of the 2008/09 school year. Following advice received from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), HPV immunisation will be offered routinely to all 12- to 13-year-old girls (school year 8) to protect them against their future risk of cervical cancer.

Highly effective vaccines are now available that protect against the two high-risk HPV types – 16 and 18 – that cause over 70% of cervical cancers. HPV vaccination will save the lives of an estimated 400 women each year in the UK.

The Department of Health (DH) is working closely with primary care trusts (PCTs) and other stakeholders to support the introduction of HPV immunisation. The key features of the HPV vaccination programme are that:

- the first cohort to be immunised will be girls born between 1 September 1995 and 31 August 1996 (school year 8 in 2008/09)
- a three-dose course of HPV vaccination is required over about six months
- a schools-based programme has been recommended
- vaccine will be supplied free of charge to PCTs, and
- a range of information materials, guidance and other resources, for both professionals and the public, will be produced.

In total, £8.9m will be provided to PCTs in the 2008/09 financial year to support the implementation of this programme, allocated on a per capita basis.

PCTs are responsible for the implementation of the HPV immunisation programme. In particular, they should ensure that:

- staffing levels are appropriate
- they work jointly with other PCTs to provide services to resident girls who attend school in a neighbouring area
- training is provided for health professionals
- they keep vaccine wastage to a minimum
- robust arrangements are in place to obtain consent for immunisation and for informing GPs when their patients have been vaccinated
- there is clear communication with parents, girls and schools
- there are arrangements for girls who miss a scheduled immunisation

From the Chief Medical Officer, the Chief Nursing Officer and the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

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PL/CPHO/2008/2

For action

- Chief executives of PCTs
- Directors of nursing
- PCT chairs
- PCT lead nurses
- PCT directors of public health
- PCT immunisation coordinators
- PCT PEC chairs
- SHA immunisation leads
- School nurses
- General practitioners
- Chief pharmacists/pharmaceutical advisers of PCTs
- Medical directors of NHS trusts
- Practice nurses
- Chief executives of SHAs
- Chief executives of NHS trusts
- Regional directors of public health

For information

- Pharmacists
- Paediatricians
- Obstetricians and gynaecologists
- Consultants in GUM
- HPU immunisation leads
- NHS foundation trusts
- Independent regulators of NHS foundations

- effective local data management systems are in place
- GP-held records for vaccinated patients are updated, and
- monthly data on vaccination uptake, and vaccine stock levels, is provided to the DH.

A new chapter on HPV vaccine for *Immunisation against Infectious Disease 2006* is now available and provides clinical advice (www.dh.gov.uk/greenbook). Further guidance on programme implementation is being sent to PCT immunisation coordinators, health protection unit immunisation leads and strategic health authority immunisation leads. The latter document, and all other materials currently available to support the programme, can be found at www.immunisation.nhs.uk/hpv. As further information becomes available, it will be placed on this website.

A two-year catch-up campaign will start from the beginning of the 2009/10 school year for all girls aged up to 18 years (i.e. 17 years and 364 days) at 31 August 2009, that is:

- all girls born between 1 September 1991 and 31 August 1993 (school years 12 and 13 in the academic year 2009/10) will be offered immunisation from the beginning of the 2009/10 school year, and
- all girls born between 1 September 1993 and 31 August 1995 (school years 11 and 12 in the academic year 2010/11) will be offered the vaccine from the beginning of the 2010/11 school year.

Further information on the catch-up campaign will follow in due course.

JCVI also advised that a catch-up campaign for all women aged 18 years and over was not cost effective, but that HPV immunisation could benefit some individual women. The DH is considering this further.

It is important to note that the national cervical screening programme remains essential to the prevention of cervical cancer, and will remain unchanged following the introduction of HPV immunisation. It is vital to ensure that cervical screening rates remain high. Immunisation will not protect against all the HPV types that cause cervical cancer.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who will help deliver this important new vaccination programme.



Sir Liam Donaldson
Chief Medical Officer



Professor Christine Beasley
Chief Nursing Officer



Dr Keith Ridge
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

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Further information

Enquiries about the HPV vaccination programme should be addressed to the local PCT in the first instance, through the immunisation coordinator/lead.

Enquiries to the Department of Health can be sent to hpv@dh.gsi.gov.uk

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