

## **HPV vaccine and its role in prevention of genital cancers**

Human papilloma virus is a common virus in the genital tract and mouth and throat of humans. Most of these viruses are not dangerous and our immune system protects us from these. However, there are a few viruses which are high risk and cause multiple cancers.

In women the HPV viruses causes cervical cancer i.e. cancer of the mouth of the uterus, cancer of vagina vulva, anal cancer and cancer of the mouth and throat. In men the HPV virus causes anal cancer, penile cancer and cancer of the mouth and throat.

The HPV vaccines which are available both in India and internationally are Gardasil and Gardasil 9. Gardasil protects against 4 HPV viruses including 16 and 18 which are responsible for 70 percent of cervical cancers in women. Gardasil 9 is more expensive and protects against 9 HPV viruses which cover 90 percent of cervical cancer. Although exact details for the other cancers are not available the HPV viruses has been seen as the causative organism. In addition to cancer the vaccine also protects against vaginal and penile warts. These a finger like masses which grow on the sexual parts and are caused by the HPV virus. They are sexually transmitted and are difficult to treat. They are very embarrassing and interfere with your sexual life.

**These vaccines are most effective** when given between 12 to 15 years but can be given any time after discussion with your gynecologist.