



Cervical Cancer Vaccination Campaign Launched

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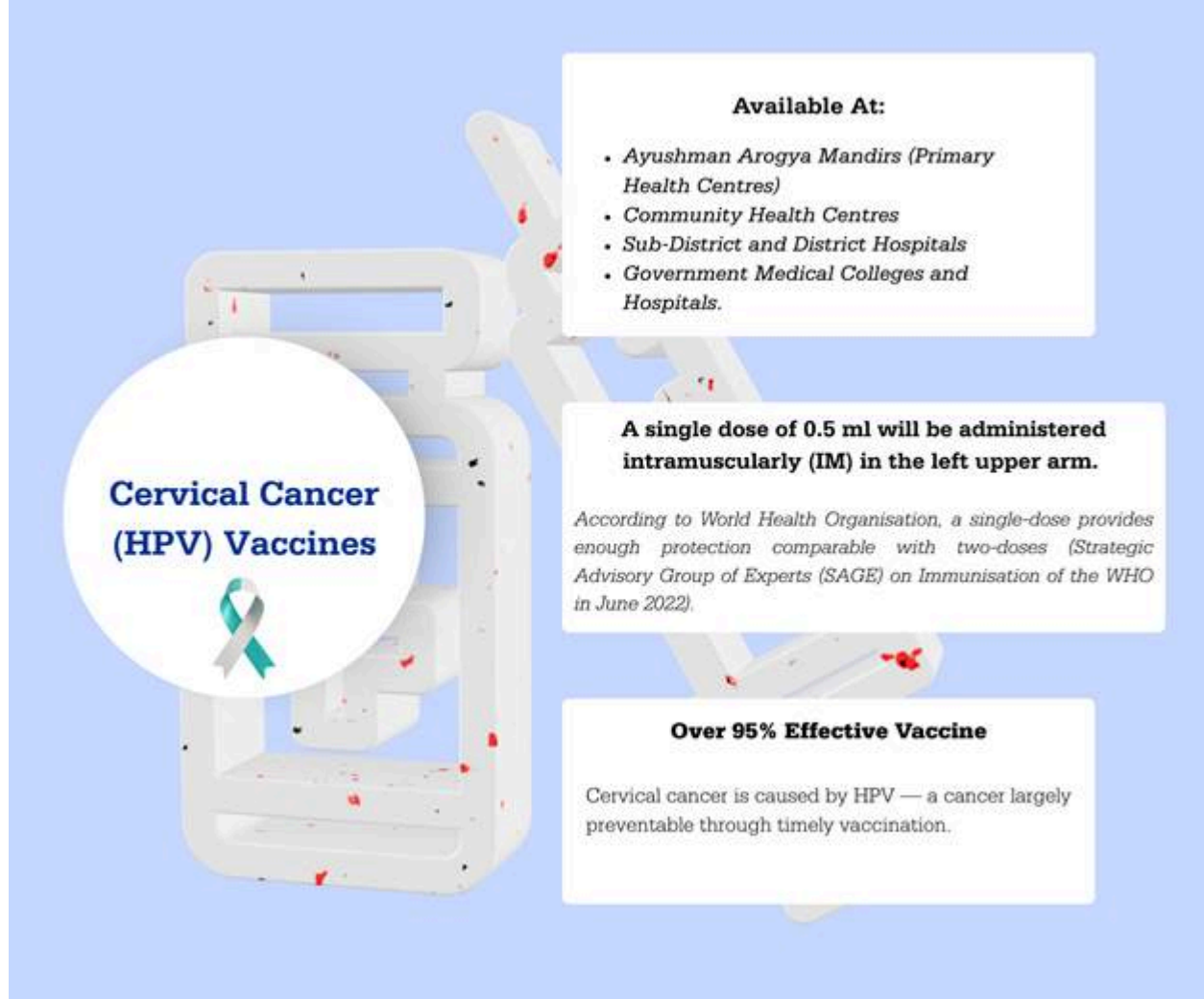
Key Takeaways

- India launches free nationwide HPV vaccination for 1.15 crore girls aged 14, aiming to prevent cervical cancer, the second most common cancer among women in the country.
- A single dose of Gardasil-4 provides 93–100% effectiveness against the HPV types responsible for cervical cancer.
- With this launch, India joins over 160 countries with HPV vaccination in their national immunisation schedules, advancing the global goal of cervical cancer elimination.

Introduction

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a nationwide HPV Vaccination Programme on February 28, 2026, at Ajmer, Rajasthan for the prevention of cervical cancer among women. Following the national launch, States and Union Territories simultaneously conducted their own HPV vaccination launch events on the same day. Vaccines will be available free-of-cost at government facilities to approximately 1.15 crore girls aged 14 years across all States and UTs.

Girls who turn 15 within 90 days of the launch will also be eligible under the intensive three-month campaign. The 90-day vaccination drive will run daily to ensure maximum coverage. Thereafter, the vaccine will continue to be available on routine immunisation days.



Cervical Cancer

Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer in women globally, with around 660,000 new cases and around 350,000 deaths in 2022. Cervical cancer is caused by persistent infection with the Human Papillomavirus. Cervical cancer disproportionately affects younger women — 20% of children who lose their mother to cancer do so due to cervical cancer.[1]

In India specifically, it is the second most common cancer among women, with over 1,20,000 new cases and nearly 80,000 deaths annually as per GLOBOCAN 2022 data.[2]

India accounts for 25% of global cervical cancer deaths. One in every five women globally who suffers from cervical cancer is from India. India ranks fourth globally in cervical cancer-related morbidity.[3] [4]

Cervical cancer is caused by Human Papillomavirus (HPV) — the only cancer preventable by a vaccine, if administered timely. Scientific evidence establishes that almost all cases are caused by persistent infection with high-risk HPV types, particularly types 16 and 18, which account for more than 80% of cervical cancer cases in India.[5]

HPV and Cervical Cancer



HPV

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a sexually transmitted virus that can infect anybody.

Cancer risk

About 10% of women with HPV infection on their cervix will develop long-lasting HPV infections that put them at risk for cervical cancer.

Cancer-causing HPV

The International Agency for Research on Cancer found that 13 HPV types can cause cervical cancer in women, affecting the cervix, which connects the vagina (birth canal) to the upper part of the uterus.



The Vaccine: Gardasil-4

India's national programme is using Gardasil, a quadrivalent HPV vaccine that protects against HPV types 16 and 18 (which cause cervical cancer), as well as types 6 and 11. The vaccine is approved by India's drug regulator and meets stringent quality and cold-chain standards. To ensure uninterrupted supply and uncompromised quality, the vaccine is being procured through a transparent mechanism in partnership with GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance. The vaccination is given to young girls at the age of 14, before they become sexually active.

In February 2023, GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance and the Government of India established a three-year partnership aimed at reaching millions of children in the country with life-saving vaccines. Through the strategic partnership, GAVI provided US\$250 million in funding to identify and vaccinate children who had not received a single routine vaccine, strengthen existing health systems, and help India introduce the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine and Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine (TCV) into the national routine immunisation schedule.

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GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance is a public-private partnership bringing together governments, WHO, UNICEF, the World Bank, the vaccine industry, civil society, and the Gates Foundation to vaccinate children against the world's deadliest diseases.

Vaccination Sites and Safety

Vaccination is available only at Government Health Facilities with a functional Cold Chain Point (CCP), a dedicated medical officer for Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFI) management, and internet connectivity.

Session timings are generally 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM and may be held on public holidays and weekends. All sites are linked to the nearest 24×7 government health facility for immediate medical support. Girls should not be on an empty stomach before vaccination. They must be kept under observation for 30 minutes post-vaccination.

Registration, Recording & Reporting

- Beneficiaries may self-register on the U-WIN digital platform, get pre-registered with the help of a health worker, or walk in for on-site registration.
- All vaccine stocks and logistics are managed and monitored through eVIN.
- Vaccination certificates are downloadable from the U-WIN portal, including the nearest 24×7 AEFI facility address and helpline number. Hard copies are available on request.
- The left index finger of each recipient is marked following vaccination during the three-month campaign.

Girls Excluded from Vaccination

- Those with moderate or severe illness (wait until complete recovery)
- Known allergy to yeast or prior allergic reaction to any vaccination
- Pregnancy

World Cervical Cancer Day: Nov. 17

The day highlights:

90-70-90 targets for cervical cancer elimination

- *90% of girls fully vaccinated with HPV vaccine by age 15*
- *70% of women screened with a high-performance test at 35 and 45*
- *90% of identified women receiving treatment*



Cervical cancer is largely preventable, highly treatable when caught early, and can be eliminated as a public health problem within a generation — with a comprehensive prevent–screen–treat approach.

- Girls outside the 14-year target age group
- Girls previously vaccinated with any HPV vaccine (Gardasil, Gardasil-9, Cervarix, or Cervavac)

Conclusion

HPV vaccines are among the most extensively studied vaccines globally, with more than 500 million doses administered worldwide since 2006. The vaccine is 93–100% effective in preventing cervical cancer caused by the HPV types it covers.

With this launch, India joins over 160 countries that have introduced HPV vaccination into their national immunisation schedules. More than 90 countries are implementing single-dose HPV vaccination schedules, improving coverage, affordability, and programme efficiency. Modelling estimates that achieving the elimination goal could avert 74 million new cases of cervical cancer and prevent 62 million deaths by 2120 worldwide.

The programme fulfils the Government's commitment to advancing the vision of "Swasth Nari Sashakt Parivar" — ensuring prevention, protection and equity at the core of women's healthcare to help build healthy families.

References

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