

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Free HPV vaccine extension means more Tasmanian women will be protected

Young women in Tasmania can now access the cervical cancer vaccine for free until the end of the year and are being encouraged to do so by General Practice Tasmania.

“More than two-thirds of young women aged up to 26 years old have already accessed the vaccination, but the opportunity now exists for even more to take it up,” said Launceston GP, Dr Leanne Jones.

The Department of Health and Ageing extended the access to the free vaccine if the first shot was administered before June 30. Young women can then complete the course of three shots for free until December 31.

“This is a safe and efficient way to protect against HPV (human papillomavirus), which is a leading cause of cervical cancer,” Dr Jones said.

“This vaccine and continuing with regular pap smears offers women the best protection against contracting HPV.”

Dr Jones said GPs are able to administer the shots and provide advice and information about the vaccine and HPV.

“Accurate figures about the number of women and girls who have been vaccinated will soon be available from the HPV register, but the extension means a higher percentage can now be protected,” Dr Jones said.

The vaccination will cost \$450 for a course of three shots from 2010.

More information about the HPV vaccine can be found at: [www.immunise.health.gov.au](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au)

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*The General Practice Tasmania network is a unique statewide infrastructure that supports contemporary general practice in Tasmania by linking GPs with each other, by supporting all members of the general practice team and, increasingly, by employing or supporting allied health professionals such as physiotherapists, dieticians and psychologists to be part of the primary care team. General Practice Tasmania is also a proud member of the Australian General Practice Network.*

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