

MEDIA RELEASE

13 OCTOBER 2009



Young women urged to have their HPV vaccine before end of catch up program

General Practice Tasmania is recommending that all girls and young women between the ages of 13 and 26, who have not completed their HPV (human papilloma virus) vaccination course, ensure they are booked in with their GP to receive their final doses of the vaccine. General Practice Tasmania said it was important this was done while the vaccine is still funded under the national 'catch up' program.

Girls aged 13 to 17 and young women aged 18 to 26 need to have commenced the HPV vaccine course of three doses by 30 June 2009 and completed it by 31 December 2009 to receive it free, as a six-month time period is required for the doses. After this time, single doses of the vaccine will cost around \$150 and the full cost for a course of three doses will be around \$450.

General Practice Tasmania immunisation spokesperson, Dr Leanne Jones, said many girls and young women aged up to 26 years have begun their HPV course but it was important they completed the full, three-dose course for the vaccine to have full coverage.

"We don't want these patients or their parents either facing unexpected costs after December or not having full HPV immunity if they fail to complete the three doses," Dr Jones said.

"This is a safe and efficient way to protect against HPV, 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 developing cervical cancer."

"GPs are able to provide the final doses of HPV vaccine under the national 'catch up' program but this ends in December this year," Dr Jones said.

More information about the HPV vaccine can be found at: www.immunise.health.gov.au

Ends.....

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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