

To the parents of \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject: Call for vaccination against *HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS* (HPV) for the prevention of uterine cervical cancer.**

***Dear Parents,***

We have made a provisional appointment for your daughter to be vaccinated against Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

An appointment for her to receive the \_\_\_\_\_dose of the vaccine has been made for \_\_\_\_\_(date)\_at \_\_\_\_\_(time) at the vaccination centre at the following address:

If, for any reason, this date is not suitable, and/or for further information, please telephone this number \_\_\_\_\_

Your daughter is a minor and must therefore be accompanied by one of her parents. Should neither parent be available, details of a substitute must be provided in writing and include the name and surname of the person who is to accompany your daughter. This proxy statement must be signed by one parent. A photocopy of this parent's Identity Card must also be provided. The vaccination record card should be brought to the appointment.

If your daughter has already been vaccinated elsewhere, please let us know the specific date/s so they can be recorded in her personal file.

**Vaccination should be an educated choice and, therefore, in the interests of your daughter's health, the following is some relevant background information:**

Cancer of the neck of the womb, which affects thousands of women in Italy each year, is caused by an extremely common virus, Human Papillomavirus (HPV).

HVP-16 and HPV-19 (the most common and the most dangerous strains of the virus) can cause lesions which, if not identified and treated, can eventually lead to the infection responsible for cancer of the neck of the womb.

There is currently no cure for Human Papillomavirus infection, which is generally contracted immediately after sexual activities begin; vaccination therefore provides an effective weapon against this sort of infection. This is why The Tuscan Region is giving all adolescent girls resident in Tuscany the chance **to take advantage of the free vaccination programme** offered by the Regional Health Service.

Vaccination is particularly advantageous because:

- It guarantees effective protection prior to any potential contagion with the HPV virus, which is usually caught immediately after sexual activities begin; this varies according to the codes of conduct at the hearts of people's lives.
- Immune response is higher in twelve-year old girls than it is in girls and women in other age groups.

Putting it off *'for a few years'* because *'my daughter is still young'* can turn out to be a serious mistake, because it means that the opportunity of an excellent response to the vaccine and a sure defence against future infection are passed up.

Before anti-HPV vaccination was introduced, periodic screening (Pap Tests) was the only prevention tool available for the early identification of lesions caused by the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). These days the **vaccination/Pap Test** combination is the most effective and complete method of preventing cancer of the neck of the womb.

It should be borne in mind that that vaccination operates alongside periodic screening (Pap Tests) for cervical cancer, currently recommended at three-yearly intervals for women aged between 25 and 64.

The vaccine is safe. There may be some mild side-effects after vaccination (swelling and redness around the injection site, general malaise and, sometimes, low-grade fever. All these effects resolve spontaneously without further consequences within a matter of days.

Vaccination should be postponed in the case of acute bouts of feverish illness.

Contraindications for vaccination are pregnancy and serious allergic reactions to drugs and/or components of the vaccine (excipients), which must be notified to the medical staff.

Information is available from your Paediatrician or family Doctor, or from the vaccination centre or the Public Health Department of your local USL health unit.

Further information is available on accredited internet sites:

<http://www.regione.toscana.it/iointantomivaccino>