

Media Release

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11th January 2010

HPV holiday catch-up clinics running at Bayfair

Girls and young women due their next HPV vaccine dose during the school holidays are being urged to head down to Bayfair next week to be vaccinated on the spot.

BOPDHB nurses will run the catch-up clinics between 9am-5pm on Monday 18th and Friday 22nd January. Anyone who is enrolled at secondary school in the Bay of Plenty or is overdue, or due for their next dose is welcome to come along. Vaccination at other times can be arranged by calling 021 242 1918. The vaccine is free to all girls and young women born after 1 January 1990.

HPV schools co-ordinator Sue Stevens says it's really important young women receive all three doses of the Gardasil vaccine to be fully protected from HPV infection, which can lead to genital warts and cervical cancer in some cases.

“Don't wait until school starts to get up-to-date with your vaccinations,” she says. “If girls are due their next dose, it's better to be on time than wait until the next scheduled school visit.”

The HPV vaccine protects against the main viruses responsible for cervical cancer and genital warts. HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) is a virus spread most commonly through sexual contact, including intimate skin to skin contact.

Sue says on-going clinical studies show that after five years, protection against the HPV virus remains high and suggest that protection will last much longer – possibly for life.

“For many girls, having a sexual partner may be a long way off, but being immunised now will mean they will be protected through the most vulnerable years when they are most at risk of contracting an HPV infection.”

She stresses that young women who are already sexually active should still get the vaccine as it is unlikely they would have been exposed to all four HPV viruses the vaccine protects against.

The Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation (PHO) will be working alongside the vaccinators, providing information and answering questions about the HPV vaccine and the link between the HPV virus and cervical cancer.

Four out of five women become infected with HPV at some time during their lifetime, and while most infections clear without the person even realising, some can lead to cervical cancer many years later. Every year around 160 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer in New Zealand and 60 women die from it.

ENDS

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