

Health Unit Media Release

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HPV Update for September – Second Year HPV vaccine available to Grade 8 girls

For the second year, the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit will be offering the three-dose Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine to Grade 8 females. This voluntary program will be administered again free of charge during the 2008/09 school year by public health nurses in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark.

HPV is an old and common virus transmitted through sexual activity. It has more recently been found to cause cervical cancer, some other rare cancers and genital warts. Every year in Ontario, about 500 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer, and 140 will die from the disease.

Cervical cancer is a serious, but preventable, disease and HPV immunization is a powerful new tool in the battle against it. **This vaccine is being offered free of charge to all Grade 8 females as a preventative, public health measure. It blocks four strains of HPV, two of which account for 70% of cervical cancer cases.**

The HPV immunization program is being offered to Grade 8 females because **the HPV vaccine is most effective if offered to females before they become sexually active.** It was integrated into the existing vaccination program in order to reach a greater number of young women.

Because the vaccine must be administered at school in three phases throughout the course of the year, **the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit will begin the program during the first two weeks of September.**

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please visit www.hpvontario.ca or call Service Ontario's INFOline at 1-866-559-4598 (TTY 1-800-387-5559) or the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit 1800-660-5853.

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