



CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

What you can do to guard against cervical cancer

Cervical cancer causes the death of around 3 000 women per year in South Africa. The main cause of cervical cancer is long-lasting infection with certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV). The good news is that the Scheme can help protect female beneficiaries against this type of cancer in two ways – HPV vaccination and screening tests (Pap smears).



HPV VACCINATION

HPV vaccination is a powerful tool in preventing cervical cancer, the fourth most common cancer in women globally. It offers long-lasting protection, reducing the risk of cancer and saving lives.

The vaccine is administered through a series of injections over several months to stimulate the immune system and protect against certain strains of HPV known to cause cervical cancer.

Is the vaccine painful, and are there any side effects?

The vaccine is generally well-tolerated and less painful than one might think. The sensation is often described as a brief discomfort. Side effects, if any, are usually mild and temporary, such as soreness at the injection site or a low-grade fever.

You can read more about HPV vaccination [here](#).



DID YOU KNOW?

Human Papillomavirus may not only lead to cervical cancer, but also other health complications such as cancers of the anus and oropharynx (affecting the tongue, tonsils, soft palate, and throat). This makes it even more important to choose HPV vaccination.

HOW MBMED CAN HELP

- Female beneficiaries aged 9 to 26 qualify for one HPV vaccination course per lifetime.
- It is covered from the separate category for Preventative Benefits, and will therefore not impact available Day-to-Day Benefits.



SCREENING TEST (PAP SMEAR)

If cervical cancer is found early, it is highly treatable and associated with long survival and good quality of life. That's where a Pap smear – a simple and effective test to identify abnormal cells collected from your cervix – can play an important role.

Pap smears detect cell abnormalities early, leading to successful treatment, better health outcomes and higher survival rates if anything is found. Early detection of abnormal cells has numerous advantages:

- You may require less invasive or expensive treatment options, preserve your fertility, and maintain overall reproductive health.
- Pap smears may prevent the development of cancer cases by detecting HPV-related concerns as well.

HOW MBMED CAN HELP

- Female beneficiaries qualify for one Pap smear or liquid based cytology screening every year.
- It is covered from the separate category for Preventative Benefits, and will therefore not impact available Day-to-Day Benefits.