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But if the follow-up tests turn up normal, smears are performed every six months. Patients face intensive follow-up; in some cases, unnecessary invasive procedures, surgical procedures and a lot of anxiety.

Genital warts

Genital warts are small lumps with irregular cauliflower-like surfaces on or around the penis, vagina, anus or external genitalia. Symptoms include irritation and itching. Treating genital warts can be extremely difficult. Prevalence is high and 30 percent of cases will reoccur.

The vaccine

The currently available HPV vaccine in Malaysia intervenes before the development of the pre-cancerous stage, a definite improvement over screening, which merely alerts to the development of dysplasia.

The vaccine prevents genital warts, dysplasia and cancer of the cervix, vagina, vulva and anus associated with HPV 6, 11, 16 and 18. Regular cervical cytology screening is still necessary as the vaccine does not cover other HPV oncogenic types eg, 31 and 45.

HPV 16 and 18 account for:

- 70 percent of all cervical cancers.
- 30 to 50 percent of anal, vulvar, vaginal and penile cancers.
- 10 percent of head and neck cancers.

HPV 6 and 11 account for:

- 10 percent of low-grade cervical abnormalities.
- 90 percent of respiratory papilloma.
- 90 percent of genital warts in men and women.

The quadrivalent vaccine is able to elicit a high antibody titer, much higher than that following

natural infection. The seroconversion is between 99 and 100 percent.

It should be administered before HPV exposure. Doses are given at zero, two and six months. The targeted age group is nine to 26 years.

Vaccination exerts maximal benefits when given before the onset of sexual activity ie, before HPV infection. Immune response to vaccination is highest among females between 10 and 14 years, and declines with age.

Females aged 26 years and younger with an equivocal or abnormal Pap test, positive HPV DNA or genital warts may also be

vaccinated as it provides protection against the other HPV types that have not infected them. Vaccination is not recommended in pregnancy, although it is safe in breastfeeding mothers and immunocompromised patients. [MMWR 2007;56(RR-2):1-24]

Conclusion

Widespread HPV vaccination will reduce cervical cytology abnormalities, lessen the need for medical care, biopsies, invasive procedures, surgeries and intensive follow-up screenings. It will lessen anxieties and morbidities associated with pre-malignant lesions. ■

GP Tip!



Oral meds for children can sometimes taste horrid. It is, thus, common that kids need coaxing to take their meds.

To overcome this, parents can freeze their kids' favorite fruit juice into ice cubes. Get the kids to suck on them continuously until their tongues are chilled. Parents can then feed the medicine. A chilled tongue cannot appreciate taste, no matter how horrible it is.

In addition, these ice cubes can also come in handy to stop bleeding and reduce pain of small lacerations on the tongue or inside oral cavities.

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Zemplar® (paricalcitol) is indicated for the prevention and treatment of secondary hyperparathyroidism in patients with chronic renal failure undergoing haemodialysis

Zemplar suppresses PTH while providing the active vitamin D essential to dialysis patients

- **SELECTIVE MECHANISM OF ACTION:** Zemplar is specifically designed to rapidly suppress PTH, with minimal effects on phosphorus and calcium¹⁻⁴
- **SURVIVAL ADVANTAGE:** In a historical cohort study, patients treated with Zemplar had a 16% greater survival benefit over those treated with calcitriol⁵
- **ESSENTIAL THERAPY:** Zemplar, an active vitamin D₃ analogue, delivers the vitamin D essential to dialysis patients^{6,8}
- **CONVENIENT DOSING:** The "Zemplar Dose Optimisation System" provides effective dosing, and the IV administration ensures consistency of treatment

References: 1. Marks RJ et al. J Am Soc Nephrol. 1996; 7: 1417-1422. 2. Lindberg J et al. Clin Nephrol. 2001;56: 315-320. 3. Yankelevitz F et al. Am J Kidney Dis. 1997; 30: 105-112. 4. Marks RJ et al. Am J Kidney Dis. 2001; 38 (suppl 3): S37-S43. 5. Yang W et al. N Engl J Med. 2002; 346: 446-450. 6. Yang W et al. J Am Soc Nephrol. 2003; 14: 1113-1123.

Refer to full prescribing information before prescribing. Full prescribing information is available upon request.

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