

Healthy Daughters, Stronger Nation

Date: 8th March, 2026, Sunday

Registration is free but mandatory:

- <https://forms.gle/7wbmpM8FphWRutjB6> to book your subsidized slot. Secure her future. Make her part of the generation that finally eliminates cervical cancer.

Protecting Our Daughters: The One-Dose Shield Against Cervical Cancer

1. The Opportunity: A Gift of Health this International Women's Day

International Women's Day, observed on March 8th, is frequently marked by symbolic gestures. However, as an oncologist who has spent decades treating the devastating end-stages of cervical cancer, I believe the most profound way to honor our daughters is through preventative action. This disease does not just take a life; it leaves a void in families and communities that can never be filled. Our hospital is hosting a subsidized vaccination drive this March 8th because we believe that life-saving technology should not be a privilege of the few, but a standard of care for all. This drive is our commitment to the global vision of a world free from cervical cancer—a future that is finally within our reach. The logistics are straightforward: on March 8th, our facility will offer the indigenous HPV vaccine at a subsidized rate to ensure maximum community access. We are removing financial hurdles so that every parent can provide their daughter with a "Gift of Health" that lasts a lifetime. By acting now, we move from the reactive stance of treating a late-stage illness to the proactive power of prevention. This transition is vital because to appreciate the value of the shield, we must first confront the reality of the enemy we are fighting.

2. The Disease: Understanding the Burden and the Power of Prevention

Cervical cancer is uniquely tragic because it is almost entirely preventable, yet it remains a leading killer of women in India. From a clinical perspective, the strategic importance of early prevention is absolute. When we fail to vaccinate, we see the staggering "Years of Life Lost" (YLLs)—a clinical term that, in reality, means children growing up without mothers and families losing their primary anchors during their most productive years. Because India's national screening coverage remains tragically low—with only 1.2% to 2.2% of women ever being screened—the vaccine is often the only reliable defense available. The statistics demand our attention:

- **A Global Epicenter:** India accounts for nearly one-fourth of all global cervical cancer deaths.
- **The Scale of the Crisis:** Every year, 123,907 Indian women are diagnosed with this disease, and 77,348 lose their lives to it.
- **Projected Burden:** Without intervention, India is projected to face a burden of 1.5 million Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) by 2025.

- **Regional Urgency:** The burden is even more pronounced in the Northeast (particularly Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh) and states like Karnataka, where DALYs exceed 300 per 100,000 women. While these numbers are sobering, they represent lives that can be saved. The solution has evolved from a complex medical journey into a breakthrough that is simpler and more effective than we ever imagined.

3. The Breakthrough: Why One Dose is the New Gold Standard

The history of vaccine science is one of constant refinement. For years, we believed multiple doses were required to build a lasting defense against the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). However, high-level clinical evidence from the ESCUDDO, KEN-SHE, and DoRIS trials has shifted the paradigm. These studies have proven that in younger populations, the immune system's response to a single dose is so robust that further doses do not necessarily provide "more protection." Following this evidence, the World Health Organization (WHO) updated its position in 2022, confirming that a single-dose schedule is sufficient for girls and young women aged 9–20 to offer robust, long-term protection.

- **Stable Immunity:** Antibody levels following a single dose remain stable and significantly higher than those achieved through natural infection, even years after the injection.
- **A Complete Shield:** For the 9–14 age group, a single dose acts as a total shield, priming the immune system to neutralize the virus before it can cause cellular changes. This breakthrough allows us to protect more daughters with less clinical friction. At our drive, we are proud to utilize India's own landmark achievement in this field: Cervavac.

4. The Shield: Safety and Excellence of Cervavac

Cervavac, manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, is the nation's first indigenous HPV vaccine. Its development is a milestone for national health security, ensuring that our daughters have access to a "Made in India" vaccine that is affordable, stable, and meets the highest global standards. By producing this vaccine indigenously, we shield our population from global supply chain volatility and ensure that cancer prevention is a permanent part of our public health infrastructure. The clinical profile of Cervavac is excellent:

- **Type:** It is a quadrivalent vaccine targeting HPV types 6, 11, 16, and 18. This is critical because types 16 and 18 are responsible for 83.2% of all invasive cervical cancers in India.
- **Effectiveness:** In Phase 2/3 trials across 12 centers in India, Cervavac proved "non-inferior" to global counterparts like Gardasil, producing a powerful and equivalent immune response.
- **Safety Profile:** Trials reported no vaccine-related serious adverse events. Common reactions are mild and temporary, such as slight pain or redness at the injection site. Science, however, is only as effective as the trust we place in it. As parents, it is natural to seek clarity before making health decisions for your child.

5. Common Questions: Empowering Parents with Facts

I see your questions not as hesitation, but as a sign of responsible parenting. Evidence-based medicine is the ultimate remedy for anxiety. What are the side effects? Most girls experience only mild, transient reactions like a headache, low-grade fever, or soreness at the injection site. These are signs that the body is successfully building its defense. Will this affect my daughter's future fertility? As an oncologist, I can tell you that the vaccine preserves fertility. There is no scientific evidence linking the vaccine to fertility issues. In reality, it is the *treatment* for cervical cancer—such as hysterectomies or radiation—

that ends a woman's ability to have children. By preventing the cancer, you are protecting her future choices. What is the risk of fainting? Fainting can occasionally happen with any adolescent injection. As a precaution, we ask children to sit or lie down for 15 minutes post-vaccination. This is strictly to prevent any injury from a fall or temporary stiffness should they feel dizzy. Why vaccinate at age 9–14? This is the "sweet spot." Younger immune systems produce a more vigorous response, and the vaccine is most effective when administered before any exposure to the virus occurs. The safety of millions of vaccinated girls globally is the ultimate proof. We are implementing a proven global success to secure your daughter's future.

6. Call to Action: Secure Her Future Today

We have reached a turning point where cervical cancer elimination is no longer a dream, but a measurable goal. By vaccinating your daughter, you are ensuring she is not one of the 123,907 women diagnosed every year. You are choosing a future of health over a future of "Years of Life Lost." The WHO has set a "90-70-90" target for 2030:

- 90% of girls fully vaccinated.
- 70% of women screened with high-performance tests.
- 90% of women with disease receiving treatment. By participating in this drive, you are fulfilling the first and most critical pillar of this vision. Do not wait for a diagnosis that could have been prevented today. How to Register for the March 8th Drive:

✓ DO's and X DON'Ts When Taking the Vaccine

✓ DO's

1 Do eat normally before coming

Have a light meal and stay hydrated to reduce chances of dizziness.

2 Do inform the doctor about:

- Any **allergies**
- Previous reaction to any vaccine
- Current fever or illness
- Ongoing medications

3 Do wear comfortable clothing

Choose short sleeves or loose clothing for easy access to the upper arm.

4 Do stay for 15 minutes after vaccination

This helps prevent injury in case of temporary dizziness or fainting (common with adolescent injections).

5 Do expect mild side effects

Normal reactions may include:

- Mild pain or redness at injection site
- Low-grade fever
- Headache
- Tiredness

These usually resolve within 1–2 days.

6 Do use a cold compress if needed

Apply gently on the injection site to reduce soreness.

7 Do continue normal routine

School, light activities, and daily tasks can continue unless discomfort is significant.

X DON'Ts

⊘ Don't take the vaccine if you have high fever

Reschedule if acutely unwell.

⊘ Don't panic about mild symptoms

They are temporary and expected.

⊘ Don't massage or rub the injection site

It may increase soreness.

⊘ Don't skip post-vaccination observation

Avoid leaving immediately after the shot.

⊘ Don't spread unverified information

Trust healthcare professionals and scientific evidence.

⊘ Don't delay vaccination unnecessarily

Timely protection is key for long-term benefit.

⚠ Seek Medical Help If:

- High fever (>102°F)
- Severe allergic reaction (difficulty breathing, swelling of face/lips)
- Persistent symptoms beyond 3–4 days

(Serious reactions are extremely rare.)