What is cancer of the cervix?
It is the abnormal and uncontrolled growth of the cells of the cervix resulting in wounds and bleeding. This cancer usually spreads to other parts of the body.

What is a cervix?
This is the opening of a woman’s womb (uterus) that connects to the vagina

What causes cancer of the cervix?
Cancer of the cervix is caused by Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)

How is HPV transmitted?
It is transmitted through sexual contact with an infected person.

What are the signs and symptoms of cancer of the cervix?
Initially there are no signs of infection. However as time progresses the following symptoms appear:
  • Pain during sexual intercourse
  • Lower abdominal pain
• Bleeding during intercourse
• Inter-menstrual bleeding
• Heavy menstrual bleeding
• Abnormal vaginal discharge with a bad smell

Who is most at risk of getting cancer of the cervix?
• All sexually active girls/women
• Girls who have sexual intercourse for the first time at an early age
• Girls/Women with multiple sex partners
• Girls/Women with other genital infections
• Girls/Women with weakened immune systems (e.g. HIV/AIDS) may also be at risk of HPV infection

Is there treatment and cure for cancer of the cervix?
Cancer of the cervix is treatable if diagnosed and treated early.

How can cancer of cervix be prevented?
• Immunisation with the HPV vaccine of all girls in the target age group: 10 year old girls in and out of school
• By delaying the first time one has sexual intercourse
• By having one sexual partner
• By preventing other sexually transmitted infections
• Early screening to detect cancer of the cervix
How many doses of HPV vaccine are required for protection?
Two doses, six months apart

Is the HPV vaccine safe?
Yes, the HPV vaccine is safe, effective and free and is approved by the Ministry of Health, WHO and UNICEF

Are there any serious potential side effects?
No, however there may be minor short lived side effects such as fever, swelling and minor pain or discomfort

Does HPV vaccine prevent the girl from getting pregnant in the future?
HPV vaccine does not stop girls from getting pregnant and having children in the future

Are there any other diseases caused by the Human Papilloma Virus?
Yes. There are other diseases namely: genital warts, vaginal cancer and vulvar cancer
WHAT ARE THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

EXTENSION WORKERS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

• Mobilizing communities for immunization
  ❖ When, where immunisation will take place and provision of regular feedback
  ❖ Encouraging parents/guardians to take their girls for immunisation

• Registration of the target group (all 10 year old girls in and out of school) in the communities
• Mapping schools for out reaches in their catchment areas
• Participate in planning and implementation of immunization activities
• Conduct home visits (tracking defaulters and provision of reminder messages to complete their schedules)
• Participate in formulation of bye-laws and enforcement
• Promoting equity of services
• Dispelling myths and rumours and giving correct information
• Acting as role models by taking their children/girls for immunization
• Organise, prepare and participate in immunisation activities
• Attend community review meetings
• Display and distribute IEC materials to support community mobilisation

TEACHERS
• Enrolment of the target group for immunisation
• Sensitisation of pupils and parents about immunisation
• Organise and coordinate pupils for immunisation activities
• Monitoring and reporting occurrences of Adverse Effects following Immunisation (AEFIs)
• Keep the immunisation cards for the girls until completion of their 2nd dose of the HPV vaccine

VHTs
• Hold sensitisation meetings in communities
• Advocate and lobby for commitment and support of immunisation services in their communities
• Collect immunisation data from the community and submit to the health facility and give feedback to the community
• Do regular monitoring of immunisation services
• Mobilise parents to take their girls for immunisation
• Register the target group for immunisation
• Detect and report occurrences of AEFIs
• Display and distribute IEC materials
• Dispel rumours
HEALTH WORKERS

- Planning for immunisation activities in the community
- Vaccination of all 10 year old girls in and out of school with in your catchment area
- HPV vaccination gives an opportunity to a health worker to look out and give TT vaccination to girls 15 years and above.
- Coordinate and organise for immunisation services
- Health Education on:
  - Danger of cancer of the cervix
  - Benefits of HPV immunisation
  - Dispelling rumours, myths and misconceptions about HPV immunisation
  - Communicate dates for the HPV immunization campaign and where the HPV immunisation will take place
  - Identify the target group – all 10 year old girls in and out of school
- Mobilisation of all 10 year old girls in and out of school for immunisation against cancer of cervix
- Referrals for screening of cancer of the cervix
- Ensure all 10 year old girls in and out of school are immunised
- Map out all the schools in your catchment area for HPV immunisation
- Quantify vaccines and injection materials required