



## DEAR GIRL IN THE SIXTH GRADE!

**You will soon be offered a vaccine against human papilloma virus (HPV). HPV infection is known to cause cervical cancer. This vaccine is included in the Finnish national vaccination programme and is offered to all girls studying in the sixth grade.**

### HPV infection? What can it cause?

HPV infections are caused by the human papilloma virus. This infection is very common: eight out of ten people are infected at some point during their lifetime. It is most common among young people.

In most cases, an HPV infection causes no symptoms and is short-lived. However, in approximately one in ten persons, the infection lasts longer, in which case precursors that have similar symptoms to cancer may develop. Some of these precursors can develop into cancer.

In Finland, approximately 150 women develop cervical cancer each year. Around 50 of these cases lead to death.

### The vaccine is effective in preventing cervical cancer

Human papilloma virus is transmitted via the skin and mucosa, usually during sexual intercourse. The HPV vaccine prevents cervical cancer by preventing HPV infections. Cancer is successfully prevented in approximately four cases out of five. However, the vaccine must be given at a reasonably young age, when the person has not yet been infected by the virus.

### A lot is known about the safety of the vaccine

The HPV vaccine is included in the vaccination programme of girls in all Western European countries and the USA, for example. Since 2007, tens of millions of doses of the HPV vaccine have been given and the occurrence of possible adverse events has been closely monitored. Serious adverse events are very rare. However, nearly all people who have been vaccinated will suffer from some temporary local symptoms such as pain, redness and swelling at the injection site.

### You will be vaccinated at school

The HPV vaccination is given free of charge. It is injected into the upper arm in two doses at least five months apart.

Your school nurse will inform you of the precise vaccination time.

*We would encourage you to discuss the HPV vaccine with your parents. It is worthwhile going over the matter together and if necessary finding out more. For further information, please ask your school nurse or visit the website: [www.tyttöjenjuttu.fi](http://www.tyttöjenjuttu.fi)*

