

## Medical experts advise parents to get their girls of 9 to 14 years of age to immunise with cervical cancer prevention vaccine to avert cancer threat:



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MIRPUR (AJK): January 9 Mirpur District Health Officer Dr. Fida Hussain Raja has said that Human Papilloma Virus stands as a special type of virus that spreads among women.

“The Human Papilloma virus- affected Women later mostly suffer cancer”, Dr. Fida H expressed these views while addressing a seminar organized at the District Health Office to provide

awareness to the media and other stakeholders regarding HPV vaccination.

The DHO disclosed on this occasion that a vaccine has been invented to prevent this life threatening virus. He continued that the women who use this vaccine are protected from this cancer. Cervical cancer is cancer of the uterus in women and this disease causes women to die and they are not even able to become mothers. To prevent this disease, HPV vaccination has been being carried out in developed countries since 2005, due to which the deaths of women suffering from cervical cancer are negligible. In Pakistan and Azad Jammu Kashmir, girls between the ages of 9 and 14 were vaccinated free of charge in September last year under the auspices of the State Health Department, while from January 2026, the vaccine has been made mandatory for 9-year-old girls to prevent cervical cancer. The public is appealed to get their 9-year-old girls vaccinated with HPV vaccine so that this disease can be eradicated.

The session was organized by MERF, a partner of the Public Health Department, in which the District Health Officer briefed all the stakeholders about the efficacy and importance of HPV vaccination. The session was also attended by Senior Vice President of District Bar Association Ms. Asma Majeed, General Secretary District Bar Council Mirpur Muhammad Fayyaz Chaudhry, APMO Dr. Fatima Yaqoob, Assistant Coordinator National Program Dr. Faria Javed, Information Officer Javed Malik, President of Private Schools and Colleges Association Mirza Wajahat Baig,

Deputy District Education Officer Zubaida Zaman, Former President Kashmir Press Club Altaf Hameed Rao, WHO Dr. Iram Sagheer, Assistant Director Surveillance/Focal Person Muhammad Riaz, Assistant Director Training Waqas Ahmed Khan, Senior Journalists Zafar Iqbal Mughal, Zahid Bashir, Imran Chaudhry, Councilor Rab Nawaz Ahmed, Councilor Qurban Hussain, AEO Raja Zamin Abbas, DSV Abdul Waheed, Bilal Ahmed Tariq Representative ACT, Noman Shahzad Monitoring Officer MERF, journalists from print, electronic and social media, civil society and people from different schools of thought.

The participants were briefed through multimedia on HPV vaccine and human papillomavirus by HPV Focal Person Muhammad Riaz. After which, a question and answer session was held in which District Health Officer Dr. Fida Hussain Raja gave detailed answers to the questions of the participants. The District Health Officer emphasized that the present era is the era of media and in this regard, people associated with print, electronic and social media should play their full role in the cervical cancer prevention campaign by the AJK Health Department so that this disease can be eradicated.

The DHO said that the cervical cancer prevention vaccine has no side effects. This vaccine must be administered to 9-year-old girls. He said that this vaccine is administered at a high cost all over the world, while the Public Health Department of Azad Jammu Kashmir has started a campaign to

purchase this vaccine and administer it free of charge and this vaccine has been declared mandatory for girls who have reached the age of 9 from this month of January 2026.

“In this regard, the media is the most important source of information and should also play its role in overcoming the spread of negative news about the HPV vaccine on social media. There is a need to effectively communicate positive news to the public.