

# A Single-Dose of HPV Vaccine as the Way Forward in Ghana

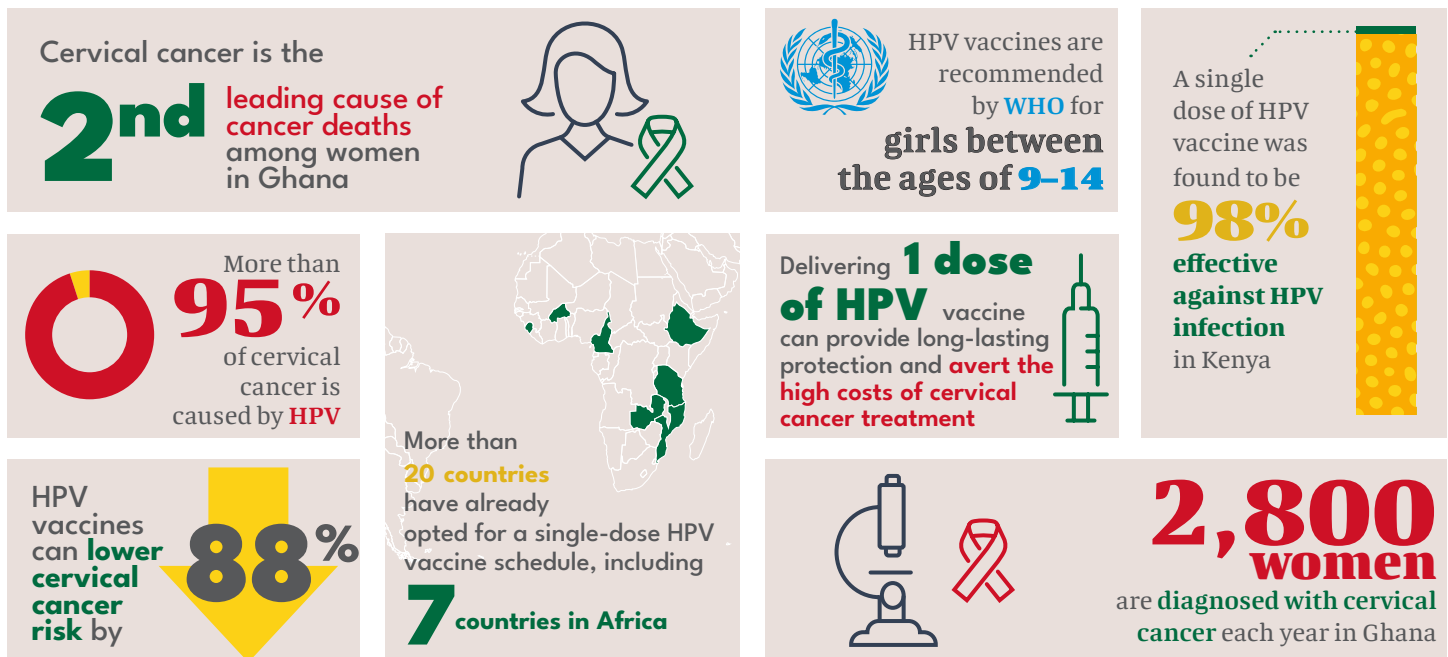


Each year in Ghana, nearly 3,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer, and approximately 1,700 women die from this largely preventable disease. Nearly all cervical cancer is caused by human papillomavirus (HPV), an extremely common infection that can be prevented with vaccination. Although cervical cancer typically affects older women, it is critical to vaccinate young girls against HPV *before* they may be exposed. From 2013–2015, **Ghana successfully piloted HPV vaccination for 10–14-year-old girls** in four districts with a three-dose schedule, **but HPV vaccination has yet to be introduced as part of Ghana’s national routine immunization program.**

HPV vaccination is one of the key pillars of WHO’s call to action for elimination of cervical cancer, along with screening and treatment. According to the latest WHO guidance, delivering **a single dose of HPV vaccine can be effective** to protect girls aged 9–14 years old from infection. This new recommendation was based on recent scientific findings comparing a single dose of HPV vaccine to two or three doses.

Using a single-dose approach to HPV vaccination has several advantages. By providing just one dose, Ghana can vaccinate twice the number of girls with the same number of vaccine doses, **increasing coverage without additional costs.** Vaccination efforts can be **more inclusive** and expanded to reach older girls who missed out on HPV vaccines. Requiring only one dose eliminates the need for follow-up, overcoming existing challenges with tracing girls through schools or the health system and reducing costs. A single-dose program would **simplify vaccination delivery** and make it easier to efficiently scale up the program and ultimately protect as many girls as possible.

**As Ghana looks to make HPV vaccines available across the country, implementing a single-dose schedule offers notable benefits and a feasible way forward to begin protecting young women from the burden of HPV infection and cervical cancer.**



**Sources** Barnabas RV, Brown ER, Onono MA, et al. (2022). Efficacy of single-dose HPV vaccination among young African women. *NEJM Evidence*, 1(5), EVID0a2100056.

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