Nationwide HPV Vaccination

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Health*

Why in News?

The Union Health Ministry is set to launch a nationwide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination program targeting adolescent girls.

- **Gardasil Vaccine –** A ***non-live quadrivalent HPV vaccine*** introduced in 2006.
- **Global safety proven –** Over 500 million doses given and *93–100% effective in preventing cervical cancer.*
  - Substantial reductions in HPV infection, pre-cancerous lesions, and cervical cancer were noted.
- **Protection –** Against ***HPV types 6 and 11, 16 and 18***
- **Dosage –** A single dose for robust and durable protection in the recommended age group.

  Globally, over 90 countries are implementing single-dose HPV vaccination.

- **Target –** Adolescent girls ***aged 14 years***, where the vaccine offers maximum preventive benefit, well before potential exposure to the virus.
- **Access –** Made available with *India's partnership with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.*
  - **In India –** It is given Voluntary and free of cost, ensuring equitable access across socio-economic groups.
- **Availability –** Designated government health facilities, including the
  - Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (Primary Health Centres),
  - Community Health Centres,
  - Sub-District and District Hospitals, and
  - Government Medical Colleges.
- **Support –** Expert medical teams and **24/7** hospital backup ensure every vaccination is safe, and post vaccination support is also given.

Cervical Cancer in India

- It is a cancer that develops in the ***cervix,*** the ***lower part of the uterus.***
- **Caused by –** Human Papillomavirus (HPV) *types 16 and 18.*
- **Disease Burden –** India currently faces a high burden, accounting for **20% of global cases** and **25% of global deaths,** largely due to late diagnosis.
- **Cervical cancer** is the 2nd most common cancer among women in India, with nearly

80,000 new cases and over 42,000 deaths annually.
- In which HPV types 16 and 18 together account for more than 80%.
- **Screening & Testing – WHO Goal –** Screen 70% of women by 2030 and transition to just two HPV tests per lifetime (at ages 35 and 45) to reduce screening burden.
- **WHO Target –** Vaccinate **90%** of girls by age 15 to reduce cervical cancer to less than 4 cases per 1,00,000 women by 2030.
- **India's Initiative –** India has developed indigenous HPV test kits developed by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) under the Department of Biotechnology's (DBT) partnership programme, Grand Challenges India (GCI).

Reference

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