

US approves anal cancer vaccine

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US health authorities have approved a vaccine intended to prevent anal cancer and pre-cancerous lesions in young people aged nine to 26 years old.

The [Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) gave the green light Wednesday to the makers of the [vaccine](#) Gardasil, which is already used to treat women with cervical, vulvar, and vaginal cancer, and associated lesions caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV) types 6, 11, 16, and 18, officials said.

"Treatment for anal cancer is challenging; the use of Gardasil as a method of prevention is important as it may result in fewer diagnoses and the subsequent surgery, radiation or [chemotherapy](#) that individuals need to endure," said Karen Midthun, director of the FDA Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research.

Although anal cancer is rare in the general population, its occurrence is increasing especially among gay men, officials noted.

The American Cancer Society estimates about 5,300 people are diagnosed with anal cancer each year in the United States, with more women diagnosed than men.

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