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Massive cancer vaccination starts in Aus schools

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Singapore:Ã?Â Australian schoolboys have begun receiving the first-of-three vaccinations to protect them against cancers and disease caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), Health Minister Ms Tanya Plibersek said.

Ms Plibersek said more than 280,000 boys will be eligible for the free Gardasil vaccine this year, which is estimated to prevent a quarter of new HPV infections. Vaccination will protect boys from cancer and genital warts, and continue to reduce the rates of cervical cancer among women.

In a first-of-its-kind event, which was announced in July, schoolboys will join more than one million Australian girls aged 12-to-16 years, who have already been fully vaccinated against HPV under the school vaccination program.

"The HPV vaccine is the best protection against the HPV virus; a virus that infects four out of five sexually active people at some point in their lives and is linked to cancer and other disease," Ms Plibersek said.

"Because of our work in this area, Australia's HPV vaccine coverage rates are among the best in the world, resulting in a significant drop in HPV-related infections," she added.Ã?Â

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