

Alert over jab for girls as two die following cervical cancer vaccination

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Last updated at 10:38 25 January 2008

A jab that could be given to hundreds of thousands of schoolgirls this autumn was at the centre of a safety scare last night following the deaths of two young women.

European regulators are investigating the "sudden and unexpected" deaths of the women who received Gardasil, one of two jabs to protect against cervical cancer licensed for use in the UK.

The vaccine has been hailed as a breakthrough by the Department of Health, which is backing an annual programme of vaccination for girls aged 11 to 13 years starting in September.

The jab is already available privately and a thirteen-year-old girl from London became the first in the country to receive the cervical cancer vaccine in 2006. Hollie Anderson's mother, Lisa, paid £450 for her to have the jab after seeing her own mother battle against cancer.



Hollie Anderson from London had the cervical cancer jab aged 13

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) said one of the young women who received Gardasil died in Germany while the other was in Austria. It has not released their ages.

It follows the deaths of three young women aged 12, 19 and 22 who were reported to have died in the U.S. days after Gardasil was administered, with 1,700 patients suffering "adverse reactions". There were no previous recorded deaths in Europe.

The EMA said: "In both cases, the cause of death could not be identified.

"No causal relationship has been established between the deaths of the young women and the administration of Gardasil."

A spokesman said 1.5million people had been given the vaccine in Europe.

She said there were no plans to change advice on the use of the vaccine.

The UK vaccination programme will protect girls against the sexually-transmitted human papillomavirus (HPV) that causes cervical cancer.

