

Cancer Vaccines



Overview

Cancer vaccines stimulate your immune system. They help your immune system recognize and fight viruses linked to cancer, or fight cancer cells directly. There are two types of cancer vaccines, "preventative" vaccines and "treatment" vaccines.

Preventative Vaccines

Preventative vaccines help your body stop infections that are known to cause cancer. For example, there are vaccines that prevent cervical cancer in women. They work by stopping the spread of certain forms of the human papillomavirus (commonly called HPV). In girls and women, this virus can cause changes in the cells of the cervix. Healthy cells become cancer cells. The immune system of a vaccinated person can destroy the virus before it causes an infection. This protects the cells of the cervix.

Treatment Vaccines

Treatment vaccines help fight cancer that already exists in your body. They help your immune system recognize the cancer cells. Your immune system then attacks the cancer. Researchers are working to develop vaccines for a wide range of cancers. Many treatment vaccines are going through clinical trials.

Conclusion

Cancer vaccines are a promising step in the fight against cancer. This new approach to cancer treatment may help prevent or destroy many common cancers in the future. Ask your doctor if a cancer vaccine could play a role in your care.

