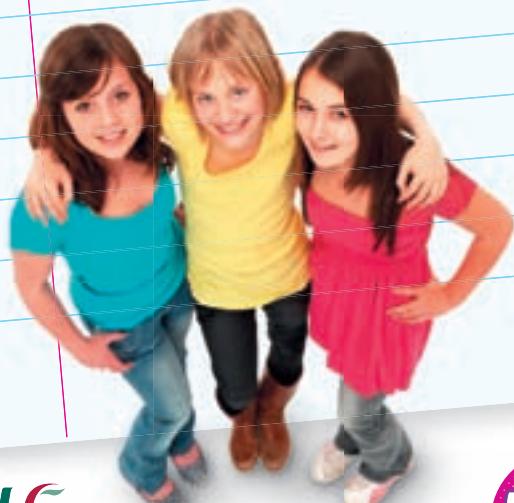


The HPV vaccine protects us from cervical cancer



INFORMATION
FOR PARENTS AND
GUARDIANS.



The HPV vaccine protects girls against cervical cancer when they are adults. This leaflet is designed to answer some common questions about the vaccine. Please read it and then fill in the enclosed consent form.

What is cervical cancer?

It is cancer of a woman's cervix, the entrance to the womb. Each year in Ireland, about 250 women get cervical cancer, and 80 women die from it. Cervical cancer is caused by HPV.

What is HPV?

HPV stands for human papillomavirus, which is a group of over 100 viruses. Most people will get a HPV infection during their lifetime, from sexual activity. Most of these infections do not need treatment, but they can cause genital warts and other skin infections. In some women HPV causes changes in the cervix that can develop into cervical cancer.

What vaccine is available to protect against HPV?

A HPV vaccine is now being offered to young girls in Ireland. This vaccine is called Gardasil and protects against the types of HPV that cause 7 out of 10 cervical cancers. It also protects against genital warts.

How does the HPV vaccine work?

The vaccine works in the same way as other common vaccines. It is given as an injection in the upper arm. The body reacts by making antibodies that will help the immune system fight HPV infection. This will protect from the types of HPV that cause 7 out of 10 cervical cancers. The vaccine cannot cause HPV infection or cancer.

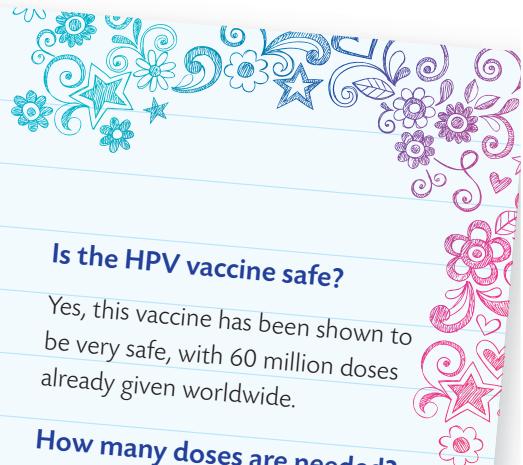


Who is being offered the vaccine?

All girls in 1st Year and 2nd Year in second level schools will be offered the HPV vaccine this year, starting in September. Most girls will be vaccinated at school by HSE immunisation teams. Some will be invited to attend a HSE clinic to get the vaccine. From 2011 onward, the vaccine will be offered each year to new 1st Year girls.

Why is this age group being vaccinated?

We are offering the vaccine to this age group so that they are protected before adulthood and likely exposure to HPV. Older girls will not be vaccinated in this programme, but they can get the vaccine privately from their GP.



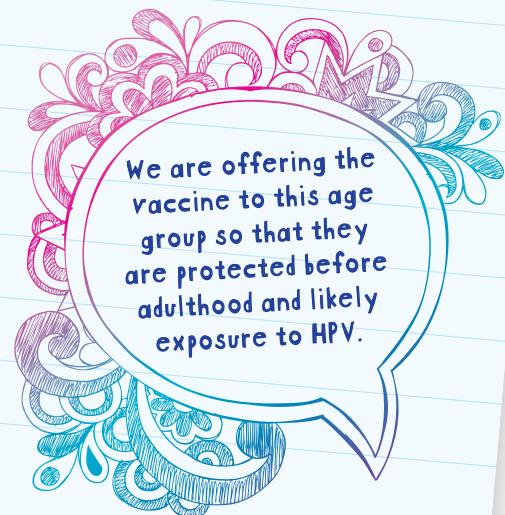
Is the HPV vaccine safe?

Yes, this vaccine has been shown to be very safe, with 60 million doses already given worldwide.

How many doses are needed?

Three doses of the vaccine are needed to give full protection. The three doses are given over 6 to 12 months in schools.

We expect the vaccine to provide long-lasting protection, but we will let you know if a booster is needed in the future.



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Does the vaccine have any side effects?

There may be some mild side effects, including:

- pain, redness or swelling in the arm where the vaccine was given and/or
- a mild fever or headache

These can be treated with paracetamol or ibuprofen.

Rarer side effects include an itchy rash or hives. Like most vaccines, severe allergic reactions are extremely rare. As usual, seek medical advice if you are concerned.

Before the next dose of HPV vaccine you should tell the vaccination team if there has been a serious reaction to a previous dose of vaccine or if there has been any change to your daughter's medical history.

Who should not receive HPV vaccine?

Girls should not receive the vaccine if they:

- have had a previous allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a previous Gardasil vaccine or any of its ingredients: amorphous aluminium hydroxyphosphate sulphate, yeast, sodium chloride, L-histidine, polysorbate and sodium borate, or
- are pregnant.

Please let us know if your daughter has an illness or condition that increases her risk of bleeding.

If a girl has a high fever, the vaccination will be postponed.

You can read more about the vaccine and its ingredients on our website, www.hpv.ie.



What if a girl has already started a course of HPV vaccine?

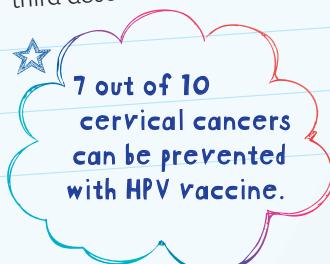
If your daughter has started a private course of HPV vaccine, it is best if she completes that course as planned. If she is to move into the HSE programme, you will need to provide records of her previous vaccinations. This is for her safety and will allow us to decide if we can include her in our programme.

What should I do next?

Please complete the enclosed consent form and return it to your school. If you are giving consent, it is for three doses of HPV vaccine.

Will I get a record of HPV vaccinations?

Girls will receive a record booklet after their first vaccination. This is an important document. They must bring this booklet with them when they are getting their second and third doses.

 7 out of 10 cervical cancers can be prevented with HPV vaccine.

What happens to a girl's HPV Vaccination Record in the HSE?

The HSE will use the information you provide to link your daughter's HPV vaccine details with her other HSE immunisation records. We will know what vaccines she has had and can call her back if a booster is needed. We will also share her details with the National Cancer Screening Service, so that they can be linked to her future cancer screening record. We will keep this data absolutely confidential.

How can girls be protected from all cervical cancer as adults?

The vaccine protects against 7 out of 10 cervical cancers, **so it is still important for girls to have regular smear tests when they are adults.**

That is why we would like to share her vaccination details with the National Cancer Screening Service.

You can read more about free cervical cancer screening for adults on www.cervicalcheck.ie





You can read more about HPV,
the HPV vaccine and cervical
cancer on www.hpv.ie, where
you will also find a factsheet in:

- Arabic
- French
- Simplified Chinese
- Polish
- German
- Portuguese
- Romanian
- Russian



Féidhmseachtaí na Seirbhise Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Produced by the HSE National Immunisation Office
Date of publication: July 2010



I'm protected now for the future

