

Facts about Vaccines for students starting secondary school in 2020

Published by the HSE National Immunisation Office, September 2020

This factsheet gives you more information about the vaccines available to your child in their first year of secondary school. Please also read the leaflet **“Vaccines to protect against: HPV, MenACWY and Tdap - Information for parents and students starting secondary school in 2020”**

You will find more information on www.hpv.ie and www.immunisation.ie.

Common questions from parents

Why are vaccines given in schools?

- Research shows that more people, especially teenagers, get vaccinated when the vaccines are given in schools.
- Countries such as Scotland and Australia which have seen a large reduction in HPV-related diseases have school-based programmes.
- The World Health Organization recommends that vaccines for school-age children are given in schools.
- Giving vaccines in schools promotes equality. All students have an equal opportunity to be vaccinated.

Can I get my child vaccinated through their GP?

The HSE school vaccination teams will give HPV, MenACWY and Tdap vaccines to students in their first year of second-level school as part of the HSE vaccination programme. This is free of charge.

The second level school vaccinations programme is not available from your GP. If you choose to get your child vaccinated by your GP, you will have to pay an administration fee and pay for the vaccines yourself.

How do we know vaccines are safe?

- All vaccines go through extensive safety testing before they are licensed.
- Once in use, vaccine safety is monitored continually.
- Any medical ‘event’ reported after vaccination is analysed to see if it is caused by the vaccine.
- The European Medicines Agency, the World Health Organization and the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention all say these vaccines are safe with no known long-term side effects.

What could happen if I do not get my child vaccinated?

- Your child may be exposed to any of these diseases either as a child or as an adult. If so, there is a good chance they will become infected and may develop one of the diseases described below.
- If your child becomes infected, they could spread the disease to others who are not protected, such as children who are too young to be vaccinated. Many people could get very sick and some could die if not enough people in your community are protected.

Where can I get more information about the vaccines?

If you have any questions, please discuss them with a member of your HSE school immunisation team, your public health nurse or your GP (doctor). You can find contact details of the immunisation team in this pack.

You can also visit www.hpv.ie and www.immunisation.ie for videos and fact sheets about the vaccines. We encourage you to read the “Vaccines to protect your child against HPV, MenACWY and Tdap” on our website or in your consent pack.

You can also find links to the patient information leaflets for the vaccines at www.hpra.ie. Search for Gardasil 9 (HPV), Nimenrix (MenACWY) or Boostrix (Tdap) or scan the QR code to read the relevant patient information leaflet.



Gardasil 9



Nimenrix



Boostrix

HPV vaccine

What is the HPV vaccine?

This is a vaccine to help prevent infection caused by human papillomavirus (HPV), one of the leading causes of cervical cancer.

When was the HPV vaccine introduced?

The HPV vaccine was introduced in Australia in 2007 and the UK in 2008. In 2010, the HPV vaccine was introduced in Ireland for girls in first year in secondary schools. The HPV vaccine was offered to boys from 2019, as the HPV virus can cause cancers and conditions that affects boys as well.

Does the HPV vaccine work?

International research studies have shown that the vaccine is very effective.

In Australia, studies have shown:

- a 77% reduction in the types of HPV responsible for most cervical cancers;
- an almost 50% reduction in the incidence of high-grade (significant) cervical abnormalities in girls under 18 years of age;
- a 90% reduction in genital warts in heterosexual men and women under 21 years of age.

In Scotland, nine out of every 10 girls aged 12 to 13 have received the HPV vaccination since 2008. Since then, there has been an 89% reduction in cervical pre-cancers in girls vaccinated. Cervical pre-cancers are changes in cells of the cervix (abnormalities) that, with time, have an increased risk of developing into cervical cancer.

What are the benefits of HPV vaccine?

The table below compares the effects of HPV with the side effects of the vaccine.

Disease	Effects of disease	Side effects of the vaccine
<p>HPV stands for human papillomavirus, which is a group of more than 100 viruses. Most people will get a HPV infection during their lifetime. It is spread by skin to skin contact, usually from sexual activity.</p>	<p>HPV infection causes changes in the cervix (neck of the womb) that can develop into cervical cancer. HPV infection is most common in people in their late teens and early 20s. HPV infection rates are rising rapidly among women and men in high-income countries, including Ireland.</p> <p>The HPV virus causes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 99% of cervical cancers• 9 out of 10 HPV-related anal cancers• 7 out of 10 vaginal cancers• 5 out of 10 vulval cancers• 9 out of 10 cases of genital warts <p>The HPV virus can also cause cancers of the head, neck and penis.</p> <p>Each year in Ireland about 400 men and women develop HPV related cancer and about 100 people die.</p>	<p>For every 1,000 people vaccinated, more than 1 in 10 will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• pain, redness or swelling in the arm where the vaccine was given• headache <p>More than 1 in 100 will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• dizziness• nausea• mild fever• tiredness <p>Allergic reactions can also occur</p>

How many countries give the HPV vaccine to girls?

More than 100 countries offer the HPV vaccine to girls including 32 countries in Europe.

How many countries give the HPV vaccine to boys?

More than 20 countries including Australia and Canada and the UK offer the HPV vaccine to boys as well as girls. HPV vaccine has been offered to boys in Ireland since September 2019.

Are there any long-term side effects from the HPV vaccine?

Australia has been giving the HPV vaccine since 2007 and has not reported any long-term side effects. The USA has been giving the HPV9 vaccine since 2014 and has not reported any long-term side effects.

The World Health Organization (WHO) Global Advisory Committee for Vaccine Safety (GACVS) reviewed the evidence on the safety of the Gardasil vaccine in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2020. The WHO has

never reported safety concerns with HPV vaccines.

Why is it important to get the HPV vaccine in the first year of secondary school?

Research shows that younger people have a better immune response to the HPV vaccine than those in their late teens and early 20s.

Also, the vaccine doesn't work as well in preventing HPV-related disease in young people who are already sexually active and likely to have already been exposed to the virus.

Will condoms prevent my child from catching HPV?

HPV is spread by intimate sexual skin-to-skin contact. Using condoms can reduce the risk of catching HPV, but they don't offer complete protection. This is why it is important that your child gets the HPV vaccine. They should also be encouraged to practise safe sex when they are older.

How can I discuss the HPV vaccine with my child?

You know best how much information your child needs about these vaccines. The leaflet that comes with this factsheet has been written in plain, easy-to-understand language so you could share this leaflet with your child or show them some of the videos on www.hpv.ie.

Does the HSE share vaccination records with any screening service?

Yes. We will share your daughter's HPV vaccination record with CervicalCheck – The National Cervical Screening Programme so that it can be linked to her future cervical cancer screening record. At present, screening is not available for any other HPV-related cancers. We will keep your daughter's details absolutely confidential.

Does my daughter still need to attend cervical screening when she is older?

Yes. Even though the vaccine protects against 9 out of 10 cervical cancers, it is still important for girls to have regular screening when they are adults. This is why we will share your daughter's vaccination details with CervicalCheck – The National Cervical Screening Programme.

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

Meningococcal ACWY vaccine

What is MenACWY vaccine?

This is a vaccine that protects against four types of meningococcal disease (a bacteria that causes meningitis and septicaemia), which can be a life-threatening illness. The MenACWY vaccine does not protect against meningitis caused by other types of bacteria or by viruses.

This is why it is important to watch out for signs of:

- meningitis (inflammation of the lining around the brain), and
- septicaemia (blood poisoning)
- and get urgent medical attention if you are concerned.

Common signs include fever, stiff neck, headache, joint pains and a rash.

The table below compares the effects of meningococcal disease with the side effects of the vaccine.

Disease	Effects of disease	Side effects of the vaccine
<p>Meningococcal disease is a serious illness caused by the bacteria called <i>Neisseria meningitidis</i>. This bacterial infection can cause meningitis (inflammation of the lining around the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning). In older children and adolescents, the main symptoms of meningitis and septicaemia may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a stiff neck • a very bad headache • severe pains and aches in the arms, legs and joints • being sleepy, less responsive, vacant, or confused • a dislike of bright lights • very cold hands and feet • shivering • rapid breathing • red or purple spots that do not fade under pressure • vomiting • fever • diarrhoea and stomach cramps • a rash • convulsions or seizures <p>Not everyone will develop all the symptoms listed. But, if your child develops some of these symptoms, especially red or purple spots, get medical help urgently.</p>	<p>Meningococcal disease can cause meningitis which can leave people with serious after-effects.</p> <p>It can also cause septicaemia which can damage the blood vessels and reduce the flow of oxygen to the skin, underlying flesh and major organs such as the kidneys, liver and lungs.</p> <p>If 1,000 people get meningococcal disease:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 will die. • 100 people who recover from meningococcal disease will have a major disability such as deafness, brain damage or loss of fingers, toes, hands, feet, arms or legs. 	<p>The most common side effects in teenagers and young people are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pain, redness or swelling in the arm where the vaccine was given • headache • fever • nausea • fatigue (feeling tired) <p>These symptoms should last no more than 24 hours. Sometimes, a small, painless lump develops, but this usually disappears in a few weeks.</p>

My child missed out on a meningococcal vaccine when they were younger. What can I do?

Don't worry if your child has not had a meningococcal vaccine before. One dose of MenACWY vaccine in young people gives them enough protection against meningococcal ACWY disease. Booster doses are not routinely recommended.

Tdap vaccine

What is the Tdap vaccine?

The Tdap vaccine protects against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis. We explain each of these in the table.

My child missed these vaccines when they were younger. What should I do?

Ask the school vaccination team for an additional dose of vaccine for your child.

The table below compares the effects of each disease with the side effects of the vaccine.

Disease	Effects of disease	Side effects of the vaccine
Tetanus – caused by bacteria in the soil which release a toxin that causes painful muscle spasms, convulsions and lockjaw.	If 1,000 people get tetanus: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100 will die The very young or old are at greatest risk.	For every 1,000 people vaccinated, one in 10 will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• pain, redness or swelling in the arm where the vaccine was given• fever
Diphtheria – this is a contagious bacterial disease spread by close contact with someone who has the disease or is a carrier. It causes a sore throat and severe breathing difficulties.	If 1,000 people get diphtheria: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50 will die The bacteria release a toxin – a poison – which can cause paralysis (loss of use of one or more muscles in your body) and heart failure.	For every 1,000 people vaccinated, one in 10 will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• pain, redness or swelling in the arm where the vaccine was given• fever
Pertussis – (Whooping cough) – this is spread by close contact with someone who is infected. It causes a ‘whooping’ cough and vomiting. The disease can last up to three months.	If 1,000 people get pertussis: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 will get encephalitis (inflammation of the brain)• 2 will die from pneumonia or brain damage• 10 will have fits• 50 will get pneumonia• 200 will need to go into hospital	For every 1,000 people vaccinated, one in 10 will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• pain, redness or swelling in the arm where the vaccine was given• fever

More information available at www.immunisation.ie and www.hpv.ie