

# HPV - Human Papillomavirus

The HPV vaccine can significantly decrease your child's chances of developing HPV-related illnesses including cancer and genital warts.

# Aims of the session:

- ▶ What is HPV?
- ▶ How do people get HPV?
- ▶ Risk Factors
- ▶ Why you should you consider vaccinating your child
- ▶ How many injections are required?
- ▶ Side effects of the vaccination
- ▶ What are the next steps?
- ▶ Any questions

# How do people get HPV?

- ▶ HPV is passed on from one person to another through intimate genital-skin contact, usually without the person ever knowing it.
- ▶ The virus enters the body through tiny breaks in the skin. You can be exposed to HPV the first time sexual activity occurs, from only one sexual partner.
- ▶ Your children may not be thinking about being sexually active yet, however the vaccine works best if it is given **before** exposure to HPV - that is, before sexual activity starts.



Multiple sexual partners

First male sexual partner has had two or more previous sexual partners (for women)

Sex without condoms

Having a weakened immune system

Sex at an early age

Skin-to-skin contact with an infected partner

Previous history of genital warts or other STDs

# Risk Factors

## Why should I consider the vaccine for my child?

- ▶ The HPV vaccine will protect your daughter against the HPV types that cause over 70% of cervical cancers. In addition, it protects against some cancers of the vagina, vulva and anus, and some cancers of the throat, head and neck. The vaccine is also effective against the strains that cause 90% of genital warts.
- ▶ The HPV vaccine will protect your son against the HPV types that cause some cancers of the penis, anus, head, neck and throat, and the strains that cause 90% of genital warts.
- ▶ The HPV vaccination is most effective when given at a younger age. Having the vaccine now means he or she will be less likely to develop HPV-related cancers or genital warts in the future.
- ▶ The National HPV Vaccination Program provides girls and boys aged 12-13 with the HPV vaccine free of charge at school. It is routinely offered in early high school in a single year level.
- ▶ This is the only time the vaccine will be available to your child conveniently through school.

# Why should my child have the vaccine aged 12 or 13?

- ▶ The Government and the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) recommend the vaccine be given to people aged 12-13.
- ▶ the vaccine works best if it is given before exposure to [HPV](#) - that is, *before* sexual activity commences.
- ▶ Also, research shows that younger people create more antibodies when given the vaccine than when in their late teens. This means they are better protected if they are exposed to HPV in the future.
- ▶ Sexual activity may be a long way off for your child. Feeling you'd prefer to wait 'until they need it' is natural, but some young people may find it awkward to tell a parent or guardian they are thinking about becoming sexually active.
- ▶ You are not endorsing or promoting sexual activity if you decide to vaccinate your child.

# Why should my child have the vaccine aged 12 or 13?

- ▶ There is no evidence that boys or girls who receive the vaccine have sex earlier than those who do not have the vaccine, and nor do they have more sexual partners once they become sexually active.
- ▶ Having the HPV vaccine is the same as any other vaccine - it is to protect your child over the course of their life, not because they are likely to be exposed to HPV in the near future.
- ▶ If your child has the vaccine now, when they are older and thinking about intimate relationships, you can feel confident that you have done your best to protect them from HPV and some of the diseases it can cause.
- ▶ The vaccine will not protect your child from other sexually transmitted infections or prevent pregnancy, so it will still be important to discuss the importance of safe sex before they become sexually active.
- ▶ Remember that while condoms will protect your child against most sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy, they only offer partial protection from HPV as they don't cover all of the genital skin.

# How many injections would my child need?

- ▶ If your child is starting their HPV vaccinations in year 8, **2 doses** of the vaccine will be given at least 6 months apart
- ▶ For older children, **3 doses** may be needed.
- ▶ This is a recent change in the national HPV programme. Previously, 3 doses of HPV vaccine were given to girls starting their vaccinations in year 8. However, a study has shown that 2 doses in those *under 15* provide the same response as 3 doses in older adolescents.
- ▶ Your child will be told how many doses she or he needs.
- ▶ It's important that your child has the full course of vaccines, on different dates, to be sure that the vaccine produces enough antibodies to give him or her the best possible protection against HPV. If they don't have all their doses they may not be as well protected against cancer and genital warts as they could be.

# What are the side affects?

Most people have no problems after their vaccination, but some may experience side effects.

Very common side effects, which occur in at least 10% of people, include:

- ▶ Pain, redness and swelling at the injection site • Headaches

Other common side effects, which occur in less than 10% but in at least 1% of people, include:

- ▶ Bruising or itching at the injection site
- ▶ Feeling sick (nausea)
- ▶ Pain in hands or feet
- ▶ Having a high temperature (fever)
- ▶ Dizziness

Other adverse events have been reported rarely. For further details, please refer to the Patient Information Leaflet, which is available at [www.medicines.org.uk/emc/PIL.19033.latest.pdf](http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/PIL.19033.latest.pdf)

If your child experiences any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in the package leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme at: [www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard](http://www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard) By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

# What should I do now?

- ▶ Information and consent form will be given to you regarding HPV vaccinations.
- ▶ You should discuss this with your son or daughter and sign and return the parental consent form once you have agreed.
- ▶ If you decline the vaccine for your child, ***please return the consent form to school anyway.***
- ▶ If you cannot come to a decision, contact your school nurse, practice nurse or GP to discuss it further.
- ▶ If the nurse is assured that your son or daughter is capable of doing so, then it is possible for them to self-consent; however, they will always aim to work in partnership with you, and will attempt to contact parents in the first instance.

Question Time:

**ANY QUESTIONS**

