

Having the HPV vaccine can help reduce your risk of cancer



If you are female and born on or after 1 September 1991 and have not completed a course of HPV vaccinations this information is for you

- HPV is the name of a very common group of viruses. Most people will get some type of HPV in their life.
- In some people the viruses do not cause problems, but some types can cause cancers of the cervix, mouth, throat and genital area. The viruses can also cause genital warts.
- They're easy to catch and pass on through sexual contact. HPV has no symptoms, so you may not know if you have it.
- The HPV vaccine helps protect against some types of HPV and has been offered in school to all girls 12-13 years old since 2008 in the UK. From September 2019 the vaccine is also being offered to 12-13 year old boys. The vaccine currently offered in the UK is called Gardasil.

To get the best protection from HPV types that can cause cancer you need;

- Two doses of the vaccine if you had the first injection before your 15th birthday
- Three doses if you are over 15 and have not had any HPV vaccine before

You can have your HPV vaccinations for free until your 25th birthday

About the HPV vaccine

- Evidence from the UK since the HPV programme started has shown;
 - A large reduction in the number of HPV infections with the main cancer causing HPV types;
 - A fall in the number of cases of genital warts; and
 - A reduction of 89% in numbers of the most severe pre-cancerous disease of the cervix in vaccinated compared to unvaccinated young women.
- Side effects of the vaccine are usually mild. You may have some soreness, swelling and redness in your arm where the vaccine was given. Serious side effects are extremely rare.
- More than 10 million doses have been given in the UK and to more than 80 million people worldwide. Evidence shows that the vaccine is very safe.

In time it is expected that the vaccine will save hundreds of lives every year in the UK by preventing cancer.

What you need to do?

- Make an appointment at your GP surgery to get yourself up to date with any missed vaccinations.
- From the age of 25 you will be invited for cervical screening tests every three years. Cancer of your cervix can be prevented by regular cervical screening.

For further information:

- Speak with your GP or practice nurse, visit NHS Direct Wales: [www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/h/article/humanpapillomavirus\(hpv\)](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/h/article/humanpapillomavirus(hpv)) or call 0845 46 47 (or 111 if available in your area)
- Safety update of HPV vaccines: www.who.int/vaccine_safety/committee/topics/hpv/June_2017/en/
- Patient information leaflet: www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/261/pil
- Cervical Screening Wales: www.cervicalscreeningwales.wales.nhs.uk/home