Vaccines to protect your child against HPV, MenACWY and Tdap

Information for parents and students starting secondary school in 2019
About this leaflet

This leaflet is for parents and students, and we hope you read it together.

The HSE school vaccination teams will shortly be visiting secondary schools to offer vaccines to all first year students – boys and girls. They will visit again in early 2020. We need parents and guardians to read, sign and return a short form to show that they agree to their child getting these vaccines. This form is called “Vaccination consent form for children starting first year of secondary school in September 2019.”

If you have a question as a parent or as a student about any part of this leaflet, please contact a member of the vaccination team. The phone number of your local team is included in this pack.

This leaflets tells you about:
• the vaccines we offer your child – what they protect against and the doses needed
• about the school vaccination teams visits
• common questions
• where you can find out more
• the consent form

The vaccines we offer - an overview

A vaccine is a substance that improves immunity (protection) to a particular disease. There are three vaccines being offered to protect a child from infectious diseases.

**The HPV vaccine** protects against the HPV virus which can cause cancer in boys and girls.

**The Meningococcal ACWY vaccine** protects against four types of meningococcal disease which can cause meningitis (inflammation of the lining around the brain) and/or septicaemia (blood poisoning).

**Tdap vaccine** which protects against:
• tetanus (tetanus toxin can cause painful muscle spasms and convulsions)
• diphtheria (bacteria that can cause a sore throat and severe breathing difficulties) and
• pertussis (a bacteria also known as whooping cough and causes severe coughing and vomiting)

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HPV vaccine: protects against cancer

MenACWY vaccine: protects against meningitis

Tdap vaccine: protects against harmful bacteria

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The school vaccination team visits

The HSE school vaccination teams will visit your child's school twice in their first year of secondary school to give vaccines to students. The following vaccines are given at each visit:

- Visit 1 starting this September: HPV vaccine and Tdap vaccine (2 injections)
- Visit 2 starting in March 2020: HPV vaccine and MenACWY vaccine (2 injections)

One vaccine is given in each arm. The next section gives information about each of the three vaccines and the viruses and bacteria they protect against.

The vaccines we offer - more details about each

Vaccine 1  HPV vaccine – for girls and boys

What is HPV?
HPV stands for ‘human papillomavirus’, which is a group of more than 100 viruses. The HPV virus is very common; most people will be infected with a form of HPV in their lifetime. You can catch HPV virus by being sexually active with another person who already has the virus. Most HPV infections do not need treatment. However, in some people, the HPV infection can persist and cause cancer. HPV also causes genital warts.

The HPV vaccine protects against cervical cancer and other cancers.

Where it is offered?
The HPV vaccine has been offered to girls in first year since 2010. This is because the most common cancer caused by the HPV virus is cervical cancer – cancer of the neck of the womb.

However, the HPV virus can also cause other cancers and conditions that can affect boys too so, from September 2019, boys will also be offered the vaccine. The more young people vaccinated – both boys and girls – the better we can control the spread of the infection.

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- Italy
- Norway
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- Norway

The UK will also begin their programme for boys in September 2019. There is more information about the success of these programmes in the fact sheet in your pack.

What cancers can HPV cause?
The HPV virus can cause a range of pre-cancerous lesions – abnormal cells – in both men and women. The HPV virus causes:

- almost all cervical cancers
- 9 out of 10 vulval cancers
- 8 out of 10 vaginal cancers
- 9 out of 10 HPV-related anal cancers
- 9 out of 10 incidences of genital warts.

Research has shown HPV infection is also associated with cancers of:

- the mouth and throat (oropharynx)
- the back passage (the rectum)
- the penis

Over 260,000 girls in Ireland and 100 million people worldwide have received HPV vaccine.
How many doses of the MenACWY meningococcal vaccine will my child need?
Only one dose of Men ACWY vaccine is needed for protection.

How many doses of the HPV vaccine will my child need?
You child will need two doses of the vaccine to give full protection. The HSE offers the first dose in school from September and the second dose from February 2020. Your child’s first year in secondary school is the best time to get the vaccine, as it is very effective at that age.

Some children may need more
Anyone starting the vaccine programme at 15 years or older needs three doses for full protection.

What is meningococcal disease?
Meningococcal disease is a serious illness which can cause meningitis (inflammation of the lining around the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning) and can lead to death. There are a number of different types of meningococcal bacteria and your child should have received a vaccine to protect against meningococcal group C when they were younger.

The Meningococcal ACWY vaccine will boost your child’s protection against group C meningococcal disease. It will also provide additional protection against meningococcal groups A, W and Y. In addition, this vaccine also reduces the risk of carrying the disease so can help protect other people too. This vaccine does not protect against all groups of meningococcal bacteria, e.g. group B, or other bacteria that can cause meningitis, so it is important that you also know the symptoms to look for and to seek urgent medical attention.

Meningococcal disease can start very suddenly. Symptoms include fever, stiff neck, headache, joint pains and a rash.

Meningococcal disease can occur at any age, but the highest rate occurs in children under 5 years of age, especially children under 1 year old. The next high-risk group are young people aged 15-19 years.
What is Tdap?
Tdap stands for tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough).

Tetanus can cause painful muscle spasms, convulsions and lockjaw (difficulty opening your mouth due to muscle spasms) leading to difficulty breathing and death.

Diphtheria is a serious disease that usually begins with a sore throat and can quickly develop to cause breathing problems. It can also damage the heart and nervous system.

Pertussis (whooping cough) is a disease that can cause long periods of coughing, choking and vomiting that can make it hard to breathe.

All of these infections are serious diseases that and could lead to your child being admitted to hospital. At worst, these conditions can cause death.

This vaccine protects your child against harmful bacteria and toxins.

How many doses of Tdap vaccine does my child need?
All children were offered vaccines against tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough when they were babies, and again in Junior Infants. Immunity to tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough) reduces over time, so we recommend a booster dose to provide additional protection. A booster dose is an additional or top-up dose.

Up to now, your child should have received four doses of a tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough vaccine – that is:
• 3 doses as a baby
• a booster dose in Junior Infants
This is their fifth and final dose and will give them lifelong protection.
Common questions

Are vaccines safe?
Yes. All vaccines are safe and have been proven to save lives and prevent serious illness. Vaccines are strictly monitored and reviewed regularly by international bodies including:

• the World Health Organisation
• the European Medicines Agency
• the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the USA

All international bodies have continually reported that the vaccines used in Ireland are safe with no known long-term side effects.

Do the vaccines have short-term side effects?
Most students have no problems after vaccines.

Some students can have an area of soreness, swelling and redness in their arm where the injection was given. This is nothing to worry about as this usually passes after a day or two.

Some students may get a headache, feel sick in their tummy or run a slight temperature. If this happens, paracetamol or ibuprofen will help.

Occasionally, some students may feel unwell and faint after getting their injection. To prevent this, the team will advise students to sit down and rest for 15 minutes after their vaccinations.

Severe allergic reactions to vaccines are very rare. School vaccination teams are trained to treat any severe allergic reaction.

Do the vaccines have long-term side effects?
There are no documented long-term side effects.

Can I wait until my child is older to get HPV, MenACWY or Tdap vaccines?
The HSE school programme offers HPV, MenACWY and Tdap vaccine to students in first year of secondary school. If you choose to wait until your child is older to get vaccinated, you may need to get your child vaccinated through your GP (local doctor) and you may have to pay an administration fee and pay for the vaccines yourself.

Will I get a record of the vaccines my child has received?
Yes. On the day of vaccination, please tell your child to give their immunisation passport to the school vaccination team. The team will add your child’s vaccination details to the passport and give it back to your child so they can bring it home. If you do not have an immunisation passport, a member of the immunisation team will give your child one after they have been vaccinated.
Where you can get more information

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 “Facts about Vaccines for students starting secondary school in 2019” on our website site 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.

The consent form for vaccines

You need to read and sign the consent form in this pack and return it to the school to make sure your child receives the vaccines in school. You can use the envelope provided to return the form to the school.

HPV, Tdap and MenACWY are available in the following languages:

- العربية
- Deutsche
- English
- español
- Français
- हिंदी
- Italiano
- 日本語
- 한국어
- Nederlands
- Português
- Русский
- Español
- ภาษาไทย
- العربية

Where you can get more information

Gardasil 9
Nimenrix
Boostrix

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