

together we can fight cervical cancer

Side effects

The side effects of the immunisation are quite mild – mostly soreness in the arm that soon wears off. Clinical trials with thousands of young women have shown that the vaccine is very safe. You cannot get HPV infection from the vaccine.

Some people have an allergic reaction soon after immunisation. This reaction may be a rash or itching affecting part or all of the body. The nurse will know how to treat this.

Very rarely, some people can have a severe reaction soon after immunisation, which causes breathing difficulties and may cause them to collapse. This is called an anaphylactic reaction. These reactions are extremely rare and nurses are fully trained to deal with them.

Consent

If you are in school, you should have been given a consent form with this leaflet. You and your parents, or carer, should discuss the information in this leaflet before agreeing to have the immunisation.

If you are aged under 16, your parents are being asked to sign the consent form. Parental agreement is always advised, although it is not always necessary. If you are aged 16 or over it is important you sign and return the form yourself.

If you, or your parents, have any questions about having the immunisation please speak to your nurse or doctor.

Sexual health and wellbeing

If you have been sexually active, there is a possibility that you may have already been infected with HPV. However, it won't be known which type of HPV you have been infected with, and it is recommended that you still have the vaccine to protect yourself against the two most serious types which can cause cervical cancer.

The HPV vaccine won't protect you against other sexually transmitted infections. If you would like more information, you can ask your nurse or doctor.

HPV immunisation is not recommended during pregnancy. If you think you may be pregnant, speak to your nurse or doctor for advice.

Missed your appointment?

If you have missed your appointment or want more information, speak to the nurse or your doctor.

More information

A Q&A booklet and DVD is available at www.fightcervicalcancer.org.uk where you, your parents or carer can find more detailed information on all the topics covered in this leaflet.

To get this leaflet in another language or format, telephone your local NHS Board. If you need help to do this, contact the free **NHS Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 (Textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88)**.

Published on behalf of the Scottish Government by NHS Health Scotland, with assistance from Health Protection Scotland.

Adapted, with permission, from material published by the Department of Health.

© NHS Health Scotland, 2009

All you need to know about the HPV vaccine that reduces the risk of cervical cancer

Information for girls born on or after 1 September 1990, eligible for the catch-up campaign



together we can
fight cervical cancer

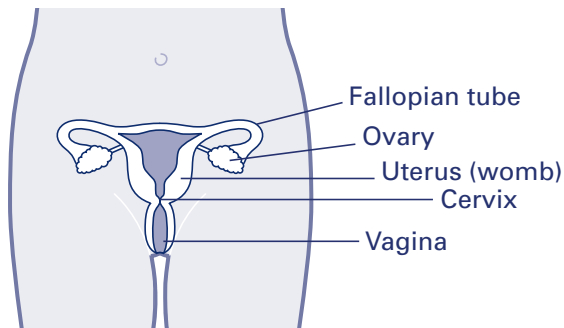
The essential guide to the HPV vaccine

This leaflet is about the immunisation (injection) that you can have now to protect you against cervical cancer when you get older. If you would like more information, go to www.fightcervicalcancer.org.uk or call the free NHS Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 (Textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88).

Cervical cancer

Cervical cancer occurs in the cervix, the entrance to the womb (see Figure A). It is caused by a virus called the **Human Papilloma Virus** or **HPV**. In the UK, around 1,000 women die from cervical cancer each year.

Figure A



How HPV causes cervical cancer

There are over 100 types of HPV, but only some can cause cervical cancer. HPV is spread by intimate skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity. Although you may not be at risk at the moment, HPV is very common and easily spread through sexual activity.

Most girls and women will be infected with HPV at some point in their lives without knowing it, as there are usually no symptoms. Most of the time, the virus does not cause cancer because the body's immune system clears it up, but not always. This is why the vaccine is so important.

The HPV vaccine

The HPV vaccine is designed to protect against the two types of HPV that can cause 70% of the cases of cervical cancer. It is important that you get this protection early enough to be effective, and the best time for that is in your teenage years.

The vaccine does not protect you against all other types of HPV, so you will still need to start going for regular cervical screening when you're 20 years old. This combination of immunisation and cervical screening offers the best possible protection against cervical cancer.

Having the immunisation

All girls in Scotland will be routinely invited to receive the HPV vaccine at 12 to 13 years of age, during their second year of secondary school.

Older girls who were born on or after 1 September 1990 are also being offered the vaccine through a catch-up campaign. See www.fightcervicalcancer.org.uk for details.

You will need three injections over a period of six months to get the best protection. The nurse or doctor will give you the injection in your upper arm. Make sure you have your breakfast on the morning of your immunisation, and if possible wear a short-sleeved or loose-fitting top.

If you are in school, you will be asked through your school to have your immunisation. Talk to your school nurse if you are planning to leave school before completing all your HPV immunisations.

If you have left school, your local NHS will contact you to make arrangements for your immunisation. There may also be clinics in your area – check the website for details.

If you suffer from asthma, eczema, hay fever or other allergies, you can still have the vaccine. If you have any concerns about this speak to the nurse or your doctor.

If you have a medical condition, or are taking regular medication, you can still have the vaccine. There is no evidence that the immunisation reduces the effectiveness of any medication or the contraceptive pill. If you are worried, talk to the nurse or doctor.

Getting the vaccine now will protect you in the future.