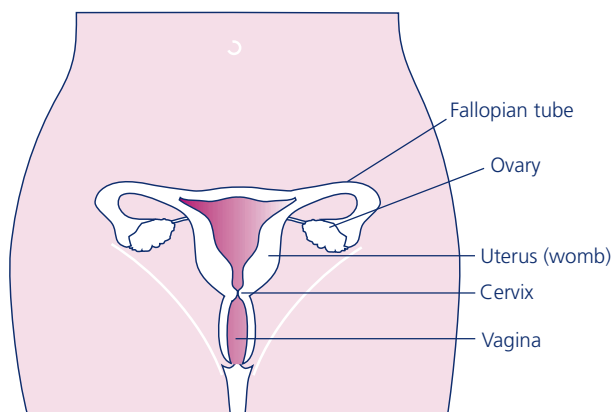


Questions and Answers about the HPV jab: Information for older teenage girls

This leaflet is for older teenage girls born on or after 1 September 1990, who are being offered the HPV immunisation. It is about the injection (jab) that can help protect you against cervical cancer when you are older.



What is cervical cancer?



Cervical cancer is a serious disease. In the UK, around 1,000 women die from cervical cancer every year. The cancer develops in the woman's cervix. This is inside her body and is part of her womb. Cervical cancer is caused by the Human Papilloma Virus, or HPV for short.



How does the virus cause cancer?

Some types of HPV can damage the cells in the cervix. If HPV gets into the cervix, it can stay for many years without causing any harm. Sometimes, it may start to cause damage. If this damage is not treated, it can turn into cancer. Women aged 20 and over should have a cervical smear test every 3 years to find out if there are any damaged cells. If the doctor finds damaged cells early enough, treatment can stop the cancer.

Even if you get the HPV jab, you should still start going for regular cervical smear tests when you are 20 years old.

You can find out more about cervical smear tests at www.healthscotland.com

Cervical smear tests

All women in Scotland aged between 20 and 60 should have a cervical smear test every three years. Getting the HPV jab when you are a teenager and going for regular cervical smear tests when you are older is the best way to stop cervical cancer happening to you.

For more information about cervical smear tests, you might like to read:

[Keep yourself healthy: a guide to having a smear test](#)

[Keep yourself healthy: do I need a smear test?](#)

For a free copy, please call NHS Health Scotland on 0131 536 5500 or visit:

www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/2869-guidetohavingasmear.may06.pdf

www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/9929-DoINeedASmearTest.pdf

How can I get HPV?



You can get HPV by having sex with someone, or even just by touching the genitals (private parts) of someone who already has the virus. Most girls and women who get HPV will be okay because it will usually go away by itself. But if it does not go away by itself, some women will get cervical cancer from HPV. That is why the HPV jab is so important.

What will the jab do?

The jab will stop you catching the 2 types of HPV that cause most cases of cervical cancer. It will not stop you catching other types of HPV, so you will still need to go for cervical smear tests when you are older. The jab will not protect you from other sexual infections. It will not stop you from getting pregnant. To find out more information about relationships and sexual health, call the free **Helpline on 0800 28 29 30**.

How long does the jab last for?

The jab will protect you from HPV for a long time.

What age do girls get the jab?

Girls usually get the jab when they are 12 or 13. It is being offered to girls your age because you were not offered it when you were younger.

How many jabs will I get?

You will get 3 jabs in the top of your arm. You will not get these at the same time. You will need to get 3 separate jabs over 6 months to give you the best protection. You should have breakfast or lunch on the day of the jab, and it is a good idea to wear short sleeves.



When will I get the jab?

If you are still at school, the school nurse will give you the dates for your jabs. If you are planning to leave school before you have had all 3 jabs, you should tell the school nurse. If you have left school, your local NHS will write to you.

Why should I get the jab now?

Giving the jab to teenage girls is the best way of helping to protect all young women against getting cervical cancer when they are older. Even if you have the jab, you should still start going for regular cervical smear tests when you are 20. You will get the best protection from cervical cancer if you get the jab now and go for regular cervical smear tests when you are older.

Will there be any side effects?

Some girls will get mild side effects, like a sore arm for a short while. The jab has been given to thousands of young women and this has shown the jab is very safe. You cannot catch HPV from the jab. If you feel ill after you have had the jab, speak to a nurse or doctor.

I take medicine. Can I still have the jab?

✓ Yes, even if you are taking medicine, you can still have the jab.

I am on the pill. Can I still have the jab?

✓ Yes, even if you take the pill, you can still have the jab.

I have an illness. Can I still have the jab?

✓ Yes, even if you have an illness, you can still have the jab.

I have allergies. Can I still have the jab?

✓ Yes, even if you have allergies, you can still have the jab. But you should tell the nurse if you have been allergic to a jab before.

Before you get the jab, the nurse will ask you about your allergies and illnesses and about any medicine you take. If you are worried, you can speak to the nurse.

Is anyone allergic to the jab?

Some people may be allergic to the jab. They may get a rash or itchy skin.

Rarely, a girl may have a serious and sudden allergic reaction called anaphylaxis, where she finds it hard to breathe. This is very unlikely to happen, but if it does, the nurse knows what to do.

If you have been allergic to a jab before, you should speak to a nurse or doctor.

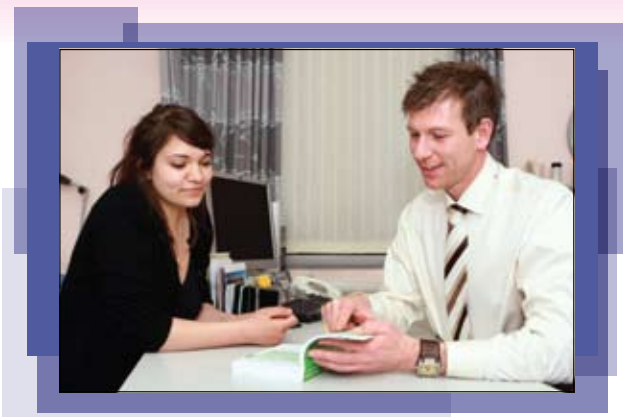


What if I miss a jab?

It is important to have the 3 jabs. If you miss a jab, the nurse or doctor will give it to you another time.

What if I do not want to have the jab?

That is up to you. The NHS says that all girls in Scotland should have the jab so that they are protected from the HPV that causes cervical cancer. If you have the jab now, it will protect you for many years. If you need more information before you decide, you can talk to a nurse or doctor.



Saying yes or no

It is a good idea to talk to your parent or carer and make a decision together. The law says that you can decide about your own medical treatment, but if you are under 16, a nurse or doctor must agree that you understand what you are making a decision about.

If you are under 16, your parent must sign the consent form. If you are 16 or older you must sign the form yourself.

What if I have already had sex?

Even if you have already had sex, you should still have the jab.

What if I am pregnant? Can I still get the jab?

! It is better to wait until after your pregnancy before you have the jab. If you think you could be pregnant, you must tell the nurse or doctor.

Why do boys not get the jab?

The reason for the jab is to protect against cervical cancer. This type of cancer only affects women.



How do I find out more about the jab?

Speak to your nurse or doctor.

Call the free **NHS Helpline** on **0800 22 44 88**
(Textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88).

Go to www.fightcervicalcancer.org.uk for more information or to watch a DVD.

Other booklets you might like to read are called:

Keep yourself healthy: a guide to having a smear test.

Keep yourself healthy: do I need a smear test?

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www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/2869-guidetohavingasmear.may06.pdf

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We are happy to consider requests for translations in alternative languages and formats. Please contact our publications team at marketing@health.scot.nhs.uk or telephone **0131 536 5500**.

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