

## The HPV vaccination Q&A

### The HPV vaccine

There are many types of human papillomavirus. The HPV vaccine protects against the two types that cause most cases (over 70%) of cervical cancer.

HPV vaccine is used in 84 countries including the USA, Australia, Canada, and most of Europe and more than 80 million people have received the vaccine worldwide.

### Having the vaccination

The nurse will give you the vaccination in your upper arm. You will be offered the first injection in year 8. The second one will be offered 6 to 12 months after the first, but it can be given up to 24 months after. It's important that you have both doses to be protected. Your school or GP surgery will inform you when you are due the second dose. The vaccine is recommended for all girls from the age of 12 years up to their eighteenth birthday.

### I missed my vaccination, can I still have it?

Yes. If you missed either of your vaccinations you should speak to your nurse or doctor about making another appointment as soon as possible. It's important to have both doses.

## Please don't forget that...

Girls who have the vaccine will significantly reduce their chance of getting cervical cancer.

Having this vaccine will also protect you against most cases of genital warts. It won't protect you against any other sexually transmitted diseases such as chlamydia and it won't stop you getting pregnant.

Cervical screening (smear tests) will continue to be important whether you have had the HPV vaccine or not.

For more information, visit [www.nhs.uk/hpv](http://www.nhs.uk/hpv) where you can download a question-and-answer sheet that gives more detailed information on the topics covered in this leaflet. A complete list of ingredients for the vaccine is given in the: Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/19033> and the Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC): [www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/19016/SPC/gardasil/](http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/19016/SPC/gardasil/)

For more information about cervical screening visit [www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk](http://www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk)



I just had my  
cervical cancer  
jab!

Great, we're  
having ours  
later!



Your HPV vaccination guide  
from September 2017

Beating cervical cancer

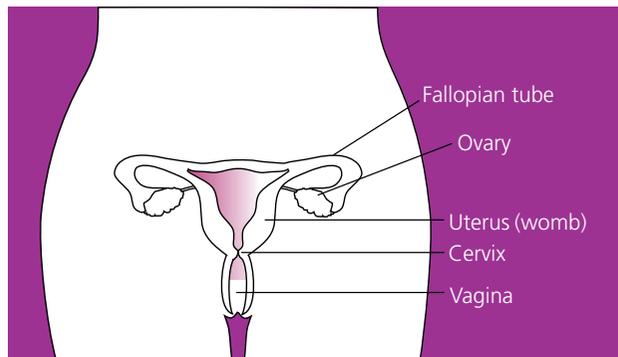
## HPV vaccine – beating cervical cancer

Having the HPV vaccine now will help protect you from getting cervical cancer when you are an adult.

### What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer is the most common cancer among women under the age of 35. In the UK, around 3000 cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed every year and about 900 women die from it, almost all in older women who were unable to benefit from the vaccination programme. There is evidence from Australia, Denmark, Scotland and England that the vaccine is already having a major impact on HPV infections. In time it is expected that the vaccine will save hundreds of lives every year in the UK.

Cervical cancer develops in the cervix (the entrance to the womb – see diagram below). It is caused by a virus called the human papillomavirus or HPV.



### HPV and how it spreads

The human papillomavirus is very common and it is caught through intimate sexual contact with another person who already has it. As it is a very common infection, most people will

get it during their lifetime. In most women the virus does not cause cervical cancer but having the vaccine is important because we do not know who is at risk of going on to develop cancer.

### Should girls who have already had sex bother with the vaccination?

**Definitely.** If you've had sex, and are in the relevant age group, you should still have the vaccine.

### Side effects

Like most injections, the side effects of the HPV vaccination are quite mild. Soreness, swelling and redness in the arm are common but wear off in a couple of days. More serious side effects are extremely rare. The vaccine has passed the strict safety standards for use in the UK and has been shown to be a very safe vaccine. Millions of doses of vaccine have already been given to girls in the UK and around the world. As with all vaccines, any reports of side effects are closely monitored and reviewed. See [www.nhs.uk/hpv](http://www.nhs.uk/hpv) or see the patient information leaflet (PIL) if you'd like more information on side effects.

### Agreeing to have the vaccination

You may want to share this information with your parents and discuss it together. If you are being offered the vaccination at school, you may be given a form for your parent/guardian or you to sign agreeing for you to have the vaccination. Information about your vaccinations will be added to your NHS records.

### My older sister had three doses, why am I only getting two?

Since the HPV vaccination programme started in the UK in 2008, the vaccine has proved to be very effective. Studies suggest that two doses of the HPV vaccine will be enough to give long-lasting protection for younger girls. The HPV vaccination programme in the UK has been two doses of HPV vaccine since September 2014.

### Now I've had the injections, will I still need to go for cervical screening?

**Yes.** All women are offered cervical screening (smear tests) when they are old enough (25 and over in England). The vaccine protects against the two human papillomavirus types that cause 70% of the cases of cervical cancer, so screening is still needed to try to pick up cervical abnormalities caused by other HPV types that could lead to cancer.

### What if I have not had my first HPV vaccine by the age of 15?

If you have not had any HPV vaccine by the time you are 15 years old you will need three doses to have full protection. This is because the response to two doses in older girls is not quite as good. The second dose will be given around a month after the first dose, and a final dose given around six months after the first dose. You should speak to your nurse or doctor about making an appointment as soon as possible.