

European Immunisation Week is celebrated across the European Region every April to raise awareness of the importance of immunisation for people's health and well-being.

The theme for this year "Vaccines work" focuses on the need for and benefits of immunisation at every stage in life.

Please read the facts below

Immunisation Facts

1. Vaccines are safe and effective

All vaccines have undergone rigorous studies to ensure that they are safe and effective before they are licensed.

They are continually monitored by medicine regulatory authorities in Ireland, Europe and by the World Health Organization.

Most vaccine reactions are minor. Serious side effects occur rarely and are immediately investigated.

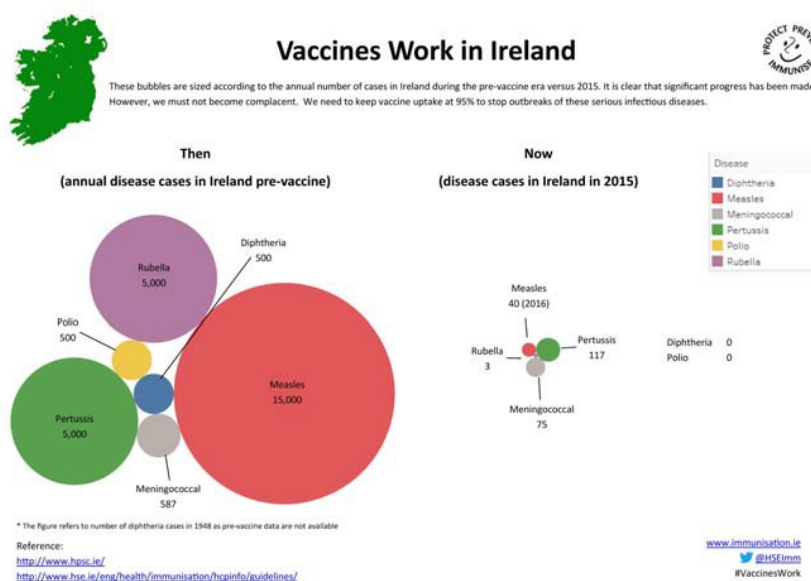
It is far more likely to be harmed by a vaccine preventable disease than a vaccine.

If 1,000 people get diphtheria 50 will die

If 1,000 people are immunised 100 will have discomfort, redness and swelling where the injection was given or will have a fever

<http://www.who.int/features/qa/84/en/>

Vaccines have reduced the number of infectious diseases In Ireland



2. It is important to get vaccines on time, every time



Vaccines need to be given at the right age so children are protected. Young children are most at risk of getting some infectious diseases and need to be protected as early as possible.

For example, children younger than six months are at the highest risk for serious complications of whooping cough (6 out of 10 children in this age group need to go into hospital, and 9 out of 10 deaths from whooping cough are in this age group).

Your child needs a number of vaccines to get the best protection, so it is important to complete the course of vaccines.

Book your appointment to make sure your child is fully protected.

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/partners/childhood/matte-articles-on-time.html>

3. Combined vaccines provide the best protection

Combined vaccines are more efficient in protecting children from diseases than separate, single vaccine injections.

Combined vaccines also reduce the number of necessary injections meaning quicker protection, less pain, less stress and less possible side effects for children e.g. the 6in1 vaccine reduces the number of injections required from 18 to 3.

Research on the immune system has shown that an infant's immune system can deal with almost 10,000 vaccines at one time. Therefore if all 13 recommended vaccines in the childhood immunisation schedule are given together, the 13 vaccines would use an extremely small portion of the infant's immune system.

Even a common cold will expose a child to far more foreign substances than vaccines.

<http://vk.ovg.ox.ac.uk/combo-vaccines-and-multiple-vaccinations>

4. Serious diseases will come back if we do not vaccinate

Vaccines given in Ireland prevent 13 diseases including measles, meningococcal disease and pertussis (whooping cough). These diseases may result in serious complications including death. Outbreaks of these serious infectious diseases will occur if children are not vaccinated.

Last year there was an outbreak of measles in Ireland with 40 cases and almost half of those affected were hospitalised.

These diseases are only a plane ride away.

- This year there have already been 4000 cases of measles in Romania.
- There were 2 deaths from diphtheria in Belgium and Spain in the past 2 years.
- Polio continues to occur in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/Immunisation/news/measles2017.html>

5. Vaccines are effective

Vaccines work most of the time but not always. Most vaccines protect at least 9 out of 10 children who get them. Sometimes immunity wanes so booster doses are needed when you are older.

[http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/Immunisation/pubinfo/newschedule/commonqs/#Do%20vaccines always work?](http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/Immunisation/pubinfo/newschedule/commonqs/#Do%20vaccines%20always%20work%20)

6. HPV vaccine is safe and effective

HPV vaccine prevents cervical cancer.

Each year in Ireland over 300 women develop cervical cancer and over 90 die from the disease.

HPV vaccine is a safe and effective vaccine.

HPV vaccine does not cause any long term medical condition.

In countries with high HPV vaccine uptake such as Australia and Scotland precancerous growths of the cervix have been reduced by more than half.

In Scotland research has shown there has been a 90% fall in cancer causing HPV infections in vaccinated girls. These new findings indicate that the positive impact of the HPV vaccine may be even greater than was initially thought. The HPV vaccination programme in Scotland has achieved a consistently high uptake of around 90% in 12- to 13-year-old girls.

Scottish Microbiological Society <https://www.microbiologysociety.org/news/hpv-immunisation-campaign-causes-massive-reduction-in-prevalence-of-cancer-causing-virus-in-scottish-women.html> (April 2017)

Since the HPV vaccination programme began in Australia in 2007, infection with cervical cancer causing HPV types 16 and 18 in young women has also fallen dramatically, leading to a fall in the number of cervical pre-cancers.

HPV vaccine impact in Australian women: ready for an HPV-based screening program

Available at <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2016/204/5/hpv-vaccine-impact-australian-women-ready-hpv-based-screening-program> (2016)

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/Immunisation/pubinfo/schoolprog/HPV/hpvfacts/>

7. Vaccines protect the wider community

Some people cannot get vaccines and it is important we are all vaccinated to protect them.

For example,

some children with a weakened immune system cannot be given the MMR vaccine

babies under 6 months of age are too young to be fully protected against whooping cough.

Both these groups are very vulnerable to the serious complications of these diseases and depend on others being vaccinated to be protected.

<https://www.historyofvaccines.org/content/herd-immunity-0>

8. Vaccines are important for pregnant women

Pregnant women should get the flu vaccine as they are at higher risk of severe complications from flu.

The vaccine protects women during pregnancy and provides on-going protection to their unborn baby during their first few months of life.

Flu vaccine can be given at any stage of pregnancy.

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/Immunisation/pubinfo/flu vaccine/infopregwomen/>

Pregnant women should get pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine during every pregnancy.

Whooping cough is a highly infectious illness which is most serious in children under 6 months. These children are too young to be fully vaccinated.

Pregnant women should be vaccinated between 16 and 36 weeks gestation. Getting the vaccine at this time gives babies the best protection during the first few months of life.

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/Immunisation/pubinfo/pregvaccs/pertussis/>

9. The best way to prevent flu is to get the vaccine

Flu is a very infectious and potentially serious illness and a new flu vaccine must be given each year.

Flu can cause severe illness and can even be life threatening for older people, those who have a long term illness and pregnant women.

Flu can be prevented by vaccination. Flu vaccine is a safe, effective way to help prevent flu infection, avoiding hospitalisation, reducing flu related deaths and illnesses.

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/Immunisation/pubinfo/flu vaccine/>



10. People trust what healthcare workers say about vaccines

We know healthcare workers are the most trusted source for information about vaccines.

Every conversation is an opportunity to promote vaccination.

It is important to keep up to date with the latest information which is available from our website www.immunisation.ie

Our website is part of the Vaccine Safety Net, a global network of websites accredited by the World Health Organization that provide reliable information on vaccine safety.

http://www.who.int/vaccine_safety/initiative/communication/network/vaccine_safety_websites/en/

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/events/events/2017/04/european-immunization-week-2017/download-campaign-material>