



# Vaccines to protect against HPV, MenACWY and Tdap

Information for parents and students in First year of secondary school



# About this leaflet

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

The HSE school vaccination teams will be offering HPV, Tdap and MenACWY vaccines to all first year students - boys and girls. 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.”

This leaflet tells you about:

- The vaccines offered to first year students – 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

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.

## The vaccines we offer

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

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

**The MenACWY 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)



**HPV vaccine:**  
protects  
against cancer



**MenACWY vaccine:**  
protects against  
meningitis



**Tdap:** protects  
against tetanus,  
diphtheria and  
whooping cough

# The school vaccination team visits

The HSE school vaccination teams will visit schools to give vaccines to students. The following vaccines are given:

- HPV vaccine
- Tdap vaccine
- MenACWY vaccine

The HPV vaccine is given in one arm and the Tdap and MenACWY vaccines are given in the other arm with a space in between.

## The vaccines - 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.

Infection is very common in both women and men more than 80% of people will get a HPV infection in their lifetime.

The HPV vaccine protects against cervical cancer and other cancers. The HPV vaccine is called Gardasil 9.

#### Why is HPV vaccine given?

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) recommends that all children aged 12 -13 years (who have not received the HPV vaccine before) should receive the HPV vaccine in the school vaccination programme so that they are protected from cancers caused by HPV when they are adults.

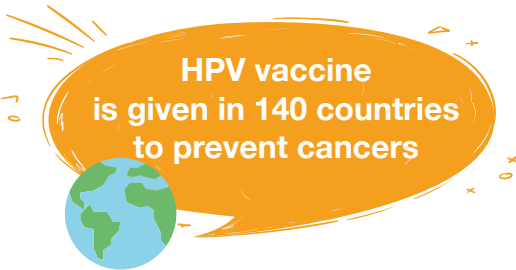
NIAC says there is a link between HPV infection and cervical, vaginal and vulvar cancer in women and head and neck (back of the throat, including the base of the tongue and tonsils) cancers and anal cancer in both men and women and penile cancer in men.

## Which countries give HPV vaccine?


Over 140 countries now have an HPV vaccine programme, with more than 50 of these countries giving the vaccine to all boys and girls. These countries include:

- Australia
- Italy
- New Zealand
- Norway
- UK
- US

There is more information about the success of these programmes on [www.hpv.ie](http://www.hpv.ie)



**HPV vaccine  
is given in 140 countries  
to prevent cancers**



**The HPV  
vaccine is  
offered to  
boys and  
girls in first  
year.**

## What cancers can HPV cause?

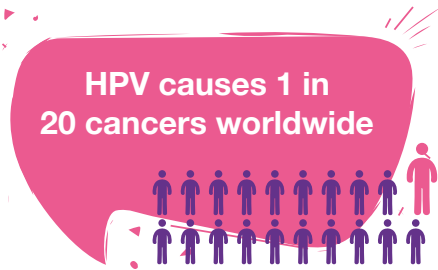
The HPV virus can cause a range of pre-cancerous lesions – abnormal cells – in both men and women. The HPV virus causes:

- almost all cervical cancers
- 5 out of 10 vulval cancers
- 7 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



**HPV causes 1 in  
20 cancers worldwide**



**Over 590,000  
students in Ireland  
and 100 million  
people worldwide  
have received HPV  
vaccine**

## How many doses of the HPV vaccine are needed?

NIAC recommended that only one dose of HPV vaccine is needed for most people through the school vaccination programme.

For people who have a significantly weak immune system 3 doses of HPV vaccine are recommended. This needs to be discussed with your child's specialist.

First year in secondary school is the best time to get the vaccine, as the vaccine is most effective at this age.

## Vaccine 2

## MenACWY Vaccine

### 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 all children should have received a vaccine to protect against meningococcal group C when they were babies.

The MenACWY vaccine will boost against meningococcal group C disease. It will also provide additional protection against meningococcal groups A, W and Y. In addition, this vaccine reduces the risk of carrying the disease so it can help protect other people too. The MenACWY vaccine is called Nimenrix.

This vaccine does not protect against all groups of meningococcal bacteria, e.g. group B, or other bacteria that can cause meningitis, and 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 of age. The next high-risk group are young people aged 15-19 years.

## How many doses of the MenACWY vaccine are needed?

Only one dose of MenACWY vaccine is needed for protection.

## Vaccine 3

# Tdap Vaccine

## What is Tdap?

Tdap stands for tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough).

This vaccine protects against harmful bacteria and toxins. The Tdap vaccine is called Boostrix.

**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 could lead to being admitted to hospital. At worst, these conditions can cause death.

## How many doses of diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough vaccine are needed for full protection?

By six years each child should have received four doses of tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine - that is:

- 3 doses as a baby
- a booster dose in Junior Infants

Immunity to these diseases reduces over time, a booster dose is recommended to provide additional protection.

A booster is an additional or top-up dose. This is their fifth and final dose and will give them long lasting protection.

Five doses will complete your course



# Common questions



## Can a student wait until they are older to get HPV, MenACWY or Tdap vaccines?

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



## Will I get a record of the vaccines given?

Yes. On the day of vaccination, immunisation passports will be updated by the school vaccination team. If you do not have an immunisation passport, a member of the immunisation team will give one after the vaccination.



## How can students prepare for vaccination day?

On the day of vaccination, students should:

- Eat breakfast
- Wear a loose-fitting short-sleeved top



## How do we know these vaccines are safe?

All the vaccines provided in the school immunisation programme 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 Organization
- 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. Some students may get a headache, feel sick in their tummy or run a slight temperature. This is nothing to worry about as this usually passes after a day or two.



## Do the vaccines have long-term side effects?

There are no documented long-term side effects.

## 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](http://www.hpv.ie) and [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie) for videos and facts about the vaccines. We encourage you to read the “Facts about Vaccines for students starting secondary school” on our website.

You can also find links to the patient information leaflets for the vaccines at [www.hpra.ie](http://www.hpra.ie). Search for Gardasil 9 (HPV), Nimenrix (MenACWY) or Boostrix (Tdap) 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.

