

HPV vaccine - information for parents/teachers

Background Note



Overview

Information for parents and teachers on the human papillomavirus vaccine which is administered to students in Year 8.

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- The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is called Gardasil®9
- This vaccine is available for females and males to protect against some of the most common types of HPV.
- The vaccine provides best protection when it is given to someone before they become sexually active.

Who should have the vaccine?

Both females and males should have the Gardasil®9 vaccine, preferably before they become sexually active.

What are the benefits?

Since the introduction of the national HPV vaccine program in 2007, data available up until the end of 2015 shows there has been a more than 90 per cent reduction in genital warts among Australian-born women and heterosexual men aged 21 years or younger attending sexual health clinics. In 2015, the proportion of people diagnosed with genital warts in both these groups was less than 1 per cent.

In 2018, students in Year 8 will be offered the Gardasil®9 vaccine. This vaccine will continue to provide similar protection to Gardasil® against infection and associated disease caused by HPV types 6, 11, 16 and 18, and will further protect against five HPV types unique to Gardasil®9 (HPV types 31, 33, 45, 52 and 58). Gardasil®9 therefore extends the protection against disease caused by HPV.

The HPV vaccine protects women against most types of cancer.

There are also benefits for men – the vaccine protects males from 90 per cent of HPV types that can cause cancers of the penis, anus and throat.

It also protects against [genital warts](#) in both sexes.

The vaccine does not treat existing HPV infections.

It is important for females to have regular [cervical screening](#) even if they have had all required doses of the HPV vaccine. This is because the HPV vaccine does not protect against all types of HPV that can cause cervical cancer.

What are the risks?

The HPV vaccine is safe and well tolerated. Around the world millions of doses have been given. The vaccine does not contain live HPV virus, but instead contains a protein that helps the body's immune system fight HPV infection.

Common side effects

Common side effects include:

- pain, redness and swelling at the injection site
- a temporary small lump in the spot the injection was given
- low grade fever
- feeling unwell
- headache
- fainting may occur up to 30 minutes after any vaccination.

How is the vaccine given?

The Gardasil®9 vaccine is delivered via a school-based program to students in year 8 in Western Australia. It is important to get all doses scheduled in the program to get the maximum protection.

Will I need a booster vaccine?

Possibly, studies are currently underway to determine if a booster (extra) dose will be necessary in the future.

After the vaccination

- The common side effects can be reduced by:
- drinking extra fluids and not overdressing if you have a fever
- placing a cold wet cloth on the sore injection site.

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Reporting an adverse event

The Western Australian Vaccine Safety Surveillance System (WAVSS) is the central reporting service in WA for any significant adverse events following immunisation.

If you have experienced an adverse reaction to a vaccine:

- visit [WA Vaccine Safety Surveillance](#) (WAVSS) (external site)
- phone WAVSS on (08) 9321 1312 (8.30am to 4.30pm).

More information

- The [National HPV Vaccination Program Register \(HPV Register\) \(external site\)](#) collects data to evaluate the impact of the HPV Vaccination Program on rates of HPV related cancers, to issue reminders if the course is incomplete, to issue confirmation the course is complete and to contact vaccine recipients if booster doses are required.
- Visit [Immunise Australia Program \(external site\)](#).

Where to get help

- For emergency or life-threatening conditions, visit an emergency department or dial triple zero (000) to call an ambulance
- See your doctor
- Visit a GP after hours
- Ring healthdirect on 1800 022 222

http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/F_I/HPV-vaccine

Postscript

This Background Note relates to the following Learning Activities:

- [HPV vaccine](#)

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