

The facts: HPV vaccine

What is the HPV vaccine?

The HPV vaccine helps protect you against some types of human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is a really common virus – in fact, most of us will have it at some point in our lives.

Our body usually gets rid of HPV without any problems, a bit like a cold. Sometimes, HPV stays in our body. If it does, over time it may develop into cancers or genital warts that affect men and women.

Can I have the HPV vaccine?

Your school will offer you the HPV vaccine between age 11 and 13.

If you miss having it in school, you can get it from your GP until you are 25 years old. This applies if you:

- are a girl and were in school year 8 (England and Wales), S1 (Scotland), or year 9 (Northern Ireland) in September 2008
- are a boy and were in year 8 (England and Wales), S1 (Scotland), or year 9 (Northern Ireland) in September 2019.

You can talk with your parent or guardian to decide if you want the vaccine.

Having the HPV vaccine

Like most injections (jabs or jags), the HPV vaccine goes into your upper arm:

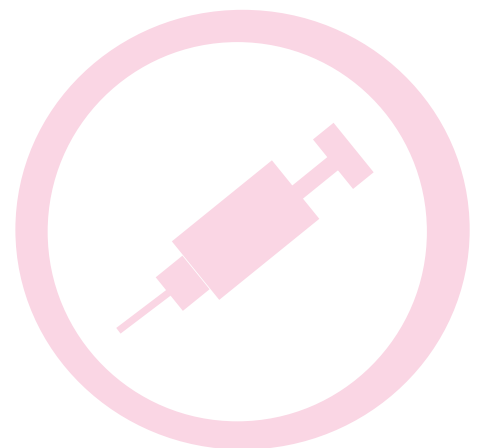
- If you are under 15, you have 2 injections, usually over 12 to 24 months.
- If you are 15 or over, you have 3 injections, usually over 6 months.

If you are worried about the injection, you aren't alone – lots of people get nervous about it. It might help to chat with your parent, guardian or school nurse before, so they can give you some support.

Is the HPV vaccine safe?

We know that the HPV vaccine is safe because it has been studied and lots of people have had it. Any side effects are usually ones that happen after any injection, like having a sore arm for a bit.

If you, or your parent or guardian, want to know more about side effects, we have more information at jostrust.org.uk/hpv-vaccine



After the HPV vaccine

If you are a girl and have had the HPV vaccine, you will still be invited for cervical screening (a smear test) from age 25.

The HPV vaccine doesn't protect against all types of HPV that may cause cervical cancer, so cervical screening is still an important test. Cervical screening checks that your cervix is healthy and you don't have HPV.

More information and support

We teamed up with Teenage Cancer Trust to develop lesson plans about HPV, the vaccine and more.

Your teacher, parent or guardian can go to jostrust.org.uk/teachers to find out more and download the free resources.

We have lots of information and support about HPV, the HPV vaccine and cervical health at jostrust.org.uk/information

Thanks and references

Thank you to everyone shared their experiences to help us develop this information. All of our information is reviewed by experts for clinical accuracy – thanks to those who reviewed this.

For references, email info@jostrust.org.uk

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