

## Does it have any side effects?

The most common side effects are pain, redness or swelling in the arm where the vaccine was given, headache, dizziness, nausea and/or a mild fever.

These symptoms can be helped with simple painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen.

Occasionally teenagers faint after getting the HPV vaccine. Like most vaccines, severe allergic reactions are extremely rare. As always, seek medical advice if you are concerned.

## I'd like to have the vaccine. What do I do now?

The vaccine is available to gbMSM up to and including 45 years of age, through many public STI and HIV clinics in Ireland.

Please ask your clinic nurse or doctor for more details.

## HPV vaccination record

Record your HPV vaccinations below to ensure that you don't miss out on protection against genital warts and HPV-associated cancers.

HPV VACCINE DOSE	DATE
1st dose	
2nd dose	
3rd dose	

**Remember to be protected,  
you need all three doses!**

*(If you are under 15 years old  
there is a two dose schedule)*

For more information on HPV,  
the vaccine and its safety, visit:  
**www.hpv.ie**

Sexual Health and  
Crisis Pregnancy Programme,  
HSE Health and Wellbeing 2021

Tel: 01 7959130

Adapted from Public Health England  
HPV Vaccination leaflet.



HPV VACCINATION  
INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR

# GAY, BISEXUAL AND OTHER MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN (gbMSM)

(INCLUDING gbMSM LIVING WITH HIV)

Protecting yourself against  
warts & cancer caused by  
human papillomavirus

*In July 2018, the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) recommended the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine for gbMSM up to and including 45 years of age. This includes gbMSM living with HIV.*

*The vaccine is available through many public STI and HIV clinics in Ireland.*

*The HPV vaccine has been shown to reduce the risk of genital warts and HPV-associated cancers.*

## What is human papillomavirus (HPV) and what diseases can it cause?

HPV infection is a very common infection. The majority of HPV infections do not cause any symptoms and infections usually clear up on their own.

There are over 100 different types of HPV that can infect the skin and mucous membranes (for example the throat, anus and penis). Persistence of some types of HPV infections can lead to cancers e.g. HPV types 16 and 18 cause the majority of HPV-associated cancers, notably anal, throat, penile and cervical cancer.

Other types of HPV such as 6 and 11 cause more than 90% of genital warts.

## How is HPV infection spread?

HPV is spread mainly by skin to skin contact. Genital HPV infections are usually associated with sexual contact.

## Can HPV infection be prevented?

Condoms reduce the likelihood of HPV infection but do not guarantee protection from infection. This is because HPV can be transmitted by skin contact with areas not covered by condoms.

Vaccination against HPV can prevent infection and reduce the chances of HPV-associated cancers. The vaccine available in Ireland is Gardasil 9, which offers protection against the HPV types that cause genital warts and many of the cancer causing types.

The best time to receive the vaccine is before you become sexually active. In Ireland, a schools HPV vaccine programme has been in place for girls since May 2010 and for boys since September 2019.

You can still get protection if you are vaccinated after becoming sexually active.

For people aged over 15 years, the vaccine is given as a course of 3 injections over 6-12 months.

WHAT DO I NEED?
<b>From 15 to 45 years of age</b>
<b>1st dose</b>
<b>2nd dose</b> at least 1 month and preferably 2 months after the first dose
<b>3rd dose</b> at least 3 months and preferably 4 months after the second dose and ideally within 12 months of the first dose

To get the best protection, it is important you receive the full course of vaccination.

## Why should gbMSM attending STI or HIV clinics be vaccinated?

The risk of anal cancer in gbMSM is higher than in heterosexual men. If you also have HIV, this risk is higher again. In addition, gbMSM are more likely to get genital warts.

HPV vaccination is an effective way to reduce your risk of genital warts and your risk of developing HPV-associated cancer in the future.

## Is the vaccine safe?

Yes. For more than 15 years the safety of the HPV vaccine has been strictly monitored and frequently reviewed by many international bodies including:

- The European Medicines Agency (EMA);
- The Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety of the World Health Organization;
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the USA.

These international bodies have continually reported that the vaccine is safe with no known long-term side effects.

*More than 100 million people have been fully vaccinated against HPV disease, this includes over 350,000 people in Ireland.*