

## 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 people living with HIV up to and including 26 years of age, and to gbMSM living with HIV up to and including 45 years of age through many public 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!**



HPV VACCINATION  
INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR

# PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

Protecting yourself against  
warts & cancer caused by  
human papillomavirus

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

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Adapted from Public Health England  
HPV Vaccination leaflet.

**In July 2018, the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) recommended the HPV vaccine for people living with HIV up to and including 26 years of age, and for gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (gbMSM) living with HIV up to and including 45 years of age. The vaccine is available through many HIV clinics.**

In general, children living with HIV <16yrs are vaccinated either through the schools immunisation programme or through paediatric HIV services.

**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 vagina, anus and cervix). 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.

For people living with HIV, the vaccine is given as a course of 3 injections over 6-12 months.

WHAT DO I NEED?
<b>From 15 to 26 years of age (for gbMSM to 45yrs)</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

The best time to receive the vaccine is before you become sexually active. You can still get protection if you are vaccinated after becoming sexually active.

To get the best protection, it is important you receive the full course of vaccination. If you have received the full course of HPV vaccinations through the schools immunisation programme you do not need to get the HPV vaccine again.

## **Why should people living with HIV attending HIV clinics be vaccinated?**

People living with HIV are at increased risk of human papillomavirus (HPV) infection. Following exposure, people living with HIV are more likely to experience persistent HPV infection and HPV-associated disease due to related immune dysfunction.

The risk of cervical, anal and penile cancers are higher in people living with HIV than the general population. The risk of anal cancer in gbMSM is higher than in heterosexual men, and for gbMSM living with 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.**