

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 free of charge to gbMSM/trans women 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.

More than 100 million people have been fully vaccinated against HPV disease, this includes over 400,000 people in Ireland

Sláinte Ghnéis &
Clár um Thoirchis Ghéarchéime
Sexual Health &
Crisis Pregnancy Programme

October 2022



HPV VACCINATION
INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR

**GAY, BISEXUAL AND
MEN WHO HAVE SEX
WITH MEN (gbMSM) AND
TRANSGENDER WOMEN**

**(INCLUDING THOSE
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.

This leaflet provides information for gbMSM and transgender women regarding HPV vaccination in Ireland.

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.

What do I need?

In October 2022, the National Immunisation Committee (NIAC) updated the recommended number of vaccine doses.

gbMSM/trans women from 15 to 24 years of age

One Single Dose

gbMSM/trans women from 25 to 45 years of age

Two Doses

The 2nd dose given between 6 and 12 months after the 1st dose

Note: if you got your 2nd dose less than 5 months after your 1st dose, you will need to get a 3rd dose

This should be given 6–12 months after the 1st dose and at least 12 weeks after the 2nd dose

gbMSM/trans women living with HIV

Three Doses

The 2nd dose 2 months after the 1st dose
The 3rd dose 4 months after the 2nd dose

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

Why should gbMSM/trans women be vaccinated?

The risk of anal cancer in gbMSM/trans women is higher than in heterosexual men. If you also have HIV, this risk is higher again. 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.