

The Universal HPV Immunization Programme

The HPV vaccine has been offered to all girls in year 7 since 2012. More than 280 million doses of the HPV vaccine have been given worldwide, including 120 million doses in the US and over 10 million in the UK.

Since 2024, the HPV vaccine is routinely recommended for girls and boys, 11-12 years of age because of their robust immune systems. It can, however, be given to them as young as 9 years.

The HPV vaccine helps protect you from being infected by the human papillomavirus (HPV).

This virus increases the risk of developing some cancers later in life, such as:

- Cervical cancer
- Some mouth and throat cancers
- Some of the genital areas

The HPV vaccine does not protect against other sexually transmitted infections.

HPV and How It Spreads

- HPV infection is very common. More than 70% of unvaccinated people will get it.
- HPV lives on the skin in and around the genital area.
- There are many different types of HPV. Most HPV infections do not cause any symptoms and get better on their own.
- Some do not clear up and can lead to cancer whilst others cause genital warts.

HPV and how it spreads

HPV infection is very **common**. More than 70% of unvaccinated people will get it

70%

HPV lives on the skin in and around the whole genital area, so using condoms does not provide complete protection from HPV



There are **many different types** of HPV



Most HPV infections do not cause any symptoms and **get better on their own**



Some do not clear up and can lead to cancer whilst others cause genital warts



What difference has the HPV vaccine made so far?

Fifteen years since the start of the vaccination programme in the UK there has been a big decline in HPV infections and in the number of young people with genital warts. In time it is expected that the vaccine will save hundreds of lives every year in the UK.

The HPV Vaccine

The HPV vaccine used in the Cayman Islands is Gardasil 9 and protects against 9 of the types of HPV which can cause cancer and genital warts for most people with just one dose.

Having the HPV vaccine

The vaccine is given as a single dose in the upper arm. It is usually given in year 7 of high school. Additional doses may be administered as recommended by your health care provider.

To give you the best protection, the vaccine should be given before becoming sexually active. If you are sexually active, you should still have the vaccine.

I missed my vaccination, can I still have it?

Yes, If you missed your vaccination at school, you should try and have it as soon as possible. Contact your school nurse, school immunization team or Public Health Clinic to arrange an appointment.

Women who have had the vaccine will still need to go for cervical screening.

The HPV vaccine will prevent up to 90% of cervical cases, but women should still attend for cervical screening when indicated.

Side effects

As with most other vaccinations, the side effects of the HPV vaccination are quite mild. The vaccine has passed the strict safety standards for use worldwide and has been shown to be a very safe vaccine. Millions of doses of vaccine have already been given to boys and girls in the UK and around the world. As with all vaccines, any reports of side effects are closely monitored and reviewed.

Common human papillomavirus vaccine side effects:

- **Pain, swelling, redness, bruising or itching around the site of the injection**

What can I do if I experience this?

This should soon pass

- **Headache**

What can I do if I experience this?

Drink plenty of water and, if troublesome, take a dose of a suitable painkiller

- **Feeling tired, dizziness, raised temperature (mild fever)**

What can I do if I experience this?

This should soon pass

- **Feeling sick (nausea), tummy (abdominal) pain**

What can I do if I experience this?

Eat simple meals – avoid rich or spicy meals.
Drink plenty of water.

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to the vaccine, speak with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.



Remember

- Get your vaccine now, to protect yourself against a number of cancers in the future.
- The vaccine is saving hundreds of lives every year around the world.
- Even with protection from the HPV vaccine you will still need health checks, such as your cervical smear when indicated.



HSA Public Health

Health Services Authority

George Town	244 2648
West Bay	949 3439
Bodden Town	947 2299
East End	947 7440
North Side	947 9525
Faith Hospital	948 2243
Little Cayman	948 0072 / 916 5395



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VACCINE
INFORMATION

HPV Gardasil



(Human Papillomavirus)



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