

Dear Parent/Guardian,

**HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) vaccination for your child.**

As your son or daughter is in year 8 they are now eligible for the HPV vaccine. This is a national routine school age programme offered to all children of 12-13 years of age throughout the UK. This important vaccine protects against different types of cancer.

Please find enclosed some frequently asked questions (FAQs) about HPV and your child, in addition, leaflets explaining the programme and further information can be obtained using the following links:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/hpv-human-papillomavirus-vaccine/>

**If you need further information you can also contact us by phone or email – please ensure you contact the team in the area that your child’s school is located in:**

- **Dudley:** 01384 431712 or vaccinationdudley@evguk.co.uk
- **Wolverhampton:** 01902 200077 or vaccinationwolverhampton@evguk.co.uk
- **Walsall:** 01922 902035 or vaccinationwalsall@evguk.co.uk
- **Sandwell:** 01215 921110 or sandwell@vaccinationuk.co.uk
- **Worcestershire:** 01527 390030 or worcestershire@vaccinationuk.co.uk
- **Herefordshire:** 01432 663085 or herefordshire@vaccinationuk.co.uk

**THIS CONSENT FORM MUST BE RETURNED TO SCHOOL WITHIN ONE WEEK TO ENSURE YOUR CHILD IS VACCINATED AT THE SCHOOL SESSION.**

**It is really important to complete and return the form even if the recommended vaccination is refused.**

**Please note:** young people under the age of 16 can give or refuse consent if considered competent to do so by nursing staff. Pupils who do not have a consent form returned may be assessed for competence to self-consent.

We look forward to hearing back from you soon.

Please share this information with your child.

Yours Sincerely,

The School Immunisation Team

## HPV Vaccine - Frequently Asked Questions

### About the vaccine:

Gardasil activates the immune system to produce antibodies against 4 types of HPV (human papilloma virus). It does this by pretending to look like the virus. The vaccine does not contain any of the virus itself. It is highly effective and is endorsed by the World Health Organisation (WHO). 270 million doses of this vaccine have been given globally.

### Why is my child being offered this vaccination?

The vaccine works best when given at age 12-13, when the immune system is strong and before your son or daughter becomes sexually active. Only two doses are needed (instead of three) if the vaccine is given before the age of 15. Both boys and girls need to get this vaccine because HPV infection is so common and some types of HPV cause cancer. Almost 90% of people get HPV infection if they are not vaccinated and there is no treatment for HPV infection. Most people's immune systems are able to clear HPV viruses in about 12 months and most people who catch HPV don't even know they have it. However, there are some types of HPV infection that can persist for decades, and these are the types that can cause cancers in both women and men. So, vaccinating people against HPV protects them from cancers caused by some types of HPV that don't clear up on their own.

### What does the vaccine protect against?

**In females:** cervical cancer, vulvar and vaginal cancer, anal cancer, genital warts, cancers of the head and neck such as throat and oral cancers.

**In males:** it protects against anal cancer, genital warts, penile cancer and cancers of the head and neck such as throat and oral cancers.

### How safe is the vaccine?

The HPV vaccination is very safe. This has been established through rigorous testing of many millions of doses throughout the world. As with any medicine some people may experience side effects, but these are generally mild and of short duration and far outweighed by the benefit of vaccination.

Researchers in the UK, the US, Scandinavia, Australia and several other countries have checked millions of medical records to see if people who get the HPV vaccine are more likely to suffer from rare health problems. They found that just as many unvaccinated people suffer from rare health problems as vaccinated people do. That means the vaccine can't be the cause of their health problems — even if they started very soon after vaccination. (1)

(1) WHO, Meeting of the GACVS, 7-8 June 2017. [Weekly Epidemiological Record](#) 2017;28:393-404

### Why are there rumours that this vaccine can have serious side effects?

Some groups are claiming on social media that vaccination could cause autoimmune disorders, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, or chronic regional pain syndrome. There was also a rumour that it could cause early menopause or infertility. These health problems are very rare and usually start around the same age that HPV is given, so it isn't surprising that people wonder if the vaccine caused the problem. However, independent scientists from all over the world have investigated and found that the rumours aren't true.

### What side effects can be expected?

The most common side effect is a mild swelling, tenderness or redness at the injection site. Other mild effects may possibly include a slight temperature, feeling achy, or nausea and diarrhoea. Very rarely some people have allergic reactions soon after immunisation called anaphylaxis. This type of reaction is *extremely rare* and the nurses are trained to deal with this extremely rare reaction in the event it may happen.