

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine

Vaccine Information Leaflet

What is the HPV Vaccine Used For?

HPV vaccines help to prevent infection with Human Papillomavirus (HPV), which may lead to cervical, vaginal and vulvar cancer in women, or anal cancer and genital warts in both women and men.

HPV infection spreads from one person to another through skin-to-skin contact such as during sexual activity, or less frequently during delivery from an infected mother to her baby.

Most HPV infections, including the strains that can cause cervical cancer, do not have any signs or symptoms. Symptoms of cervical cancer may include abnormal vaginal bleeding such as bleeding after menstrual periods or after sex. There may also be changes in the amount, colour or smell of vaginal discharge. It is recommended to have regular screening, e.g. Pap smear to detect cervical cancer early.

What are the types of HPV vaccines available in Singapore?

There are two types of HPV vaccines available in Singapore. They are the HPV2 (Cervarix), and HPV9 (Gardasil 9). Cervarix provides protection against HPV types 16 and 18, which account for 70% of all cervical cancers, and have been shown to be both clinically- and cost-effective in the local setting. It is registered for use in females. Gardasil 9 provides protection against an additional 20% of cancer-causing HPV types. It is registered for use in both females and males.

Who Should Receive the HPV Vaccine?

The Singapore National Childhood Immunisation Schedule (NCIS) and National Adult Immunisation Schedule (NAIS) recommend that all females should receive the vaccine between the ages of 9 – 26. For those under 15, there is a total of 2 doses and for those 15 and above it is a total of 3 doses (at intervals of 0, 1-2 months and 6 months). Although not included in the NCIS and NAIS for males, some HPV vaccines are licensed for use in males to protect them from being infected and spreading the HPV virus.

What Precautions Should I Follow Before Receiving the HPV Vaccine?

Inform your healthcare professional if:

- You are allergic to this vaccine or any of the other ingredients of this vaccine
- You are pregnant or planning to become pregnant
- You are taking any other medications
- You are currently not feeling well and having a fever
- You have a weak immune system due to an illness such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection or cancer
- You are currently on medications which may weaken your immune system (e.g. high dose steroids)
- You have a history of bleeding disorders

How Is the HPV Vaccine Given?

It is given by injection into the muscle.

It is given as a series of two or three doses, depending on the age when the first dose was given.

What Are Some Common Side Effects of the HPV Vaccine?

- Some people may feel faint after the vaccination
 - Sit for 15 minutes after receiving the vaccine to avoid fainting
- Pain, redness and swelling at the injection site
 - You may place a cold compress over the affected area for relief
 - You may take paracetamol for pain relief
- Headache, fever
 - You may take paracetamol to treat the headache or fever
- Muscle ache
 - These side effects usually go away on its own

Please see a doctor if these side effects do not get better or become worse.

What Are Some Rare But Serious Side Effects That I Need to Seek Medical Advice Immediately?

The symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following:

- Swollen face/eyes/lips/tongue
- Difficulty in breathing
- Itchy skin rashes over your whole body

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should inform your healthcare professional immediately.

Disclaimers

The information provided on this page does not replace information from your healthcare professional. Please consult your healthcare professional for more information.

This article is jointly developed by members of the National Medication Information workgroup. The workgroup consists of cluster partners (National Healthcare Group, National University Health System and SingHealth), community pharmacies (Guardian, Unity and Watsons) and Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore. The content does not reflect drug availability and supply information in pharmacies and healthcare institutions. You are advised to check with the respective institutions for such information.

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