

The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is being made available through specialist Sexual Health Services (SHSs) and HIV clinics to gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM) who are up to and including 45 years of age.

The vaccine will help to prevent HPV infection which can cause genital warts and HPV-associated cancers. It is especially important for those who are living with HIV, and those who have multiple sexual partners.

This leaflet includes information about the HPV vaccine and the diseases that it will help to protect against.

HPV vaccination record

Record your HPV vaccinations below to ensure that you don't miss out on protection against genital warts and HPV related cancers.

HPV vaccine dose	Date
1st dose	
2nd dose	
3rd dose*	

Remember, to be protected you need to complete the full course of the vaccine:

- 2 doses – routine schedule all MSM
- 3 doses* – HIV+ and individuals who are immunocompromised (people with a weakened immune system)

HPV vaccination

Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM)

For men



What is human papillomavirus (HPV) and what diseases can it cause?

There are over 100 types of HPV that infect the skin and mucous membranes. The majority of HPV infections do not cause any symptoms and infections usually resolve on their own.

Some HPV infections which persist, such as HPV types 16 and 18, can lead to cancers e.g. HPV types 16 and 18 cause the majority of HPV associated cancers and increase the risk of developing HPV-related cancers later in life, such as:

- some mouth and throat cancers (head and neck)
- some cancers of the anus and genital areas
- cervical cancer in women

Other types of HPV such as 6 and 11 cause genital warts.

How is HPV infection spread?

HPV is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections in the UK. HPV is spread mainly by skin to skin contact. Genital HPV infections are highly contagious, and usually associated with sexual contact. Nearly all sexually active people get infected with HPV at some point in their lives. The risk increases with the number of sexual partners you and/or your partners have.

Can HPV infection be prevented?

Condoms do not guarantee protection from infection. This is because HPV can be transmitted by skin contact with areas not covered by condoms.

The best way to protect yourself from HPV infection is to get vaccinated. The vaccines we offer to MSM attending SHSs and HIV clinics are called Gardasil or Gardasil 9. Either vaccine can be given and both vaccines protect against the 4 HPV types 6, 11, 16 and 18 that are responsible for causing cancers and

genital warts. Gardasil 9 protects against additional types 31, 33, 45, 52, 58.

The vaccine is a course of 2 doses given at least 6 months apart. If you are HIV+ or immunocompromised you will require 3 doses of vaccine at 0, 1 and 4 to 6 months.

WHAT DO I NEED?

1st dose

2nd dose*

at least 6 months after the first dose

*There is a 3-dose schedule for those who are HIV+ or immunocompromised.

Ideally, vaccine should be given before you become sexually active, but the protection is still good even if you receive the vaccine later. To get the best protection, it is important you receive the full course of vaccination.

Why should MSM attending SHSs and HIV clinics be vaccinated?

The risk of anal cancer in MSM is higher than in heterosexual men. If you also have HIV, this risk is higher again. In addition, MSM are more likely to get genital warts. MSM attending SHSs or HIV clinics are known to have an increased risk of HPV infection and disease.

In the UK, a HPV vaccine programme for girls aged 12 to 13 has been in place since 2008 and was extended to boys aged 12 to 13 in September 2019. MSM stand to benefit less from herd protection from the years of female-only vaccination.

HPV vaccination is a very effective way to reduce your risk of genital warts immediately and your risk of developing HPV-associated cancer in the future.

Does it have any side effects?

Like most injections, the side effects of the HPV vaccination are quite mild. Soreness, swelling and redness in the arm are common but wear off in a couple of days. More serious side effects are extremely rare.

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

See www.nhs.uk/hpv or see the patient information leaflet (PIL) if you'd like more information on side effects.

What do I do now?

Please ask your clinic nurse or doctor for more details. The vaccine is available in SHSs and HIV clinics.

For more information on HPV and HPV vaccine safety:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/hpv-human-papillomavirus-vaccine/

www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/can-oral-sex-give-you-cancer/

A complete list of ingredients for the vaccine is given in the Patient Information Leaflet (PIL):

Gardasil:

www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/261/pil

Gardasil 9:

www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/7330/pil