

HPV

Vaccine



Preventing human papillomavirus (HPV) cancers and diseases by vaccination

Helping to protect young people from a range of cancers and diseases caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV)

health.gov.au/immunisation



Australian Government
Department of Health



National
Immunisation
Program

A joint Australian, State and Territory Government Initiative

HPV

Vaccine

Why get vaccinated?

The HPV vaccine prevents seven HPV types that cause several cancers, including:

- ✓ cervical cancer in females
- ✓ vaginal and vulval cancers in females
- ✓ anal cancer in females and males
- ✓ throat cancers in females and males
- ✓ penile cancer in males.

The HPV vaccine also protects against two HPV types that cause genital warts in both males and females.

What is HPV?

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common, contagious virus that can cause cancers and diseases in both men and women.

It is mainly spread by skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity.

Without vaccination, 90% of adults will have a HPV infection at some point in their life. There is no treatment to get rid of HPV infection.

In most people the virus is harmless and causes no symptoms. You may not know that you have it and your immune system clears the virus. However, in some people the virus can persist and may, usually after a long period of time, cause some types of cancers.

How effective is the vaccine?

- ✔ HPV vaccination **(and regular cervical screening in females)** is a safe and reliable way to protect young people from getting a range of HPV related cancers and diseases.
- ✔ Almost all HPV infections that cause abnormal cells and cancer can be prevented by the HPV vaccine.
- ✔ Studies have shown that the vaccine is proving very effective in Australia. There has been a big decrease in HPV infections, pre-cancers of the cervix and genital warts.
- ✔ The vaccine works best when given at a younger age and before exposure to HPV.



From 2018, *Gardasil*[®]9 will replace the existing HPV vaccine (*Gardasil*[®]) provided for free through the National Immunisation Program (NIP).

The new HPV vaccine protects against nine HPV types (previously four types). Children get the vaccine in two doses over six months (previously three doses). Three doses are recommended for children aged 15 years of age and over or those who are immunocompromised.

Recent evidence suggests that the new vaccine protects against 90% of cervical cancers. Introducing *Gardasil*[®]9 on the NIP gives young Australians the best possible protection against HPV.

Anyone fully vaccinated with the four type HPV vaccine *Gardasil*[®] has protection against the two types of HPV which are estimated to cause almost 80% of cervical cancers in Australia. Experts do not recommend also having *Gardasil*[®]9.

How do you get vaccinated?

The vaccine is provided free to children aged approximately 12–13 through school-based immunisation programs.

It involves getting two injections, six months apart. It is important to receive two doses to get the best possible protection against HPV.

The school will distribute information about the vaccine, and a consent form. Vaccination will not be provided unless the school has received a signed consent form. Vaccines will always be given by a qualified vaccination provider.

Delaying vaccination

Delaying vaccination to 15 years of age or older will mean that three doses are required instead of two. The National Immunisation Program only covers two doses for free.

Individuals who did not receive the vaccine at school are eligible for two free catch up doses up to 19 years of age.

Where can I get more information?

- ✓ **Speak to your doctor, practice nurse, or other immunisation provider.**
- ✓ **Visit [health.gov.au/immunisation](https://www.health.gov.au/immunisation)**

How safe is the vaccine?

HPV vaccines used in Australia are very safe. The vaccine has been provided through school-based programs in Australia since 2007 for females and 2013 for males. Millions of doses have been given all over the world.

Scientists and medical researchers from around the world, including Australia, have tested all HPV vaccines available in Australia to make sure they are safe. In Australia, as in other countries, there is ongoing monitoring of vaccine safety.

Some people might experience mild side effects from the vaccine. These can include:

- ✓ soreness, swelling and redness at the injection site
- ✓ mild temperature
- ✓ feeling faint and fainting.

Like other vaccines, a very small number of people can have an allergic reaction shortly after getting the vaccine. Vaccination providers are prepared to manage these types of reactions.

See your GP if you are worried about your child's reaction.

A circular logo with a teal background and a white dotted border. The text "HPV" is in large, bold, white capital letters, and "Vaccine" is in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it.

HPV
Vaccine

You can learn more about the safety of the HPV vaccine at the Therapeutic Goods Administration website tga.gov.au