

How safe is the vaccine?

HPV vaccines used in Malta are very safe and have been provided for females for years. It is now also available for males.

HPV vaccines will not cause cervical cancer or HPV-related diseases since the vaccines do not contain live viruses.

The HPV vaccine is generally well-tolerated. The most common side effects include:

- Pain and redness at the injection site
- Fever
- Dizziness
- Headache and nausea

These usually resolve after a short time.

Serious reactions to the HPV vaccines are very rare.

Like other vaccines, a very small number of people can have an allergic reaction shortly after getting the vaccine. Vaccines, in general, should not be taken in cases of allergy to a previous dose of the same vaccine or one of its components.

Vaccination should be postponed in cases of acute illness with fever.

HPV vaccination together with future regular cervical screening (smear tests) will help protect against genital cancer.

If you need to change the appointment for the HPV vaccine, kindly contact the National Immunisation Service on

21 231 231

For further information on HPV, visit
www.sexualhealth.gov.mt
www.primaryhealthcare.gov.mt

or contact us on our social media



@HPDPMalta
@SHMaltaHPDP
@primaryhealthcaremalta

The HPV Vaccine

SEXUALHEALTH
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Health Promotion & Disease
Prevention Directorate



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
MINISTRY FOR HEALTH



Primary
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What is HPV?

- HPV stands for Human papillomavirus.
- It is a very common type of virus.
- There are over 100 types of HPV, some may even cause health problems like cancer or genital warts.

Most people who have HPV do not know they have it, allowing the virus to be passed on without knowing.

- Nearly all cervical and genital cancers (99.7%) are caused by infection with a high-risk type of HPV.



How is HPV transmitted?

HPV can be transmitted from:

- Any skin-to-skin contact of the genital area (The virus can spread during any kind of sexual activity, including touching using fingers, hands, mouth and genitals).
- Vaginal, anal or oral sex
- Sharing of sex toys

Most people will get an HPV infection sometime during their life, and the body will get rid of the virus on its own without treatment. However, some people may get infected with a high-risk type of HPV and will not be able to clear it.

- Condoms offer some protection against HPV but do not cover all the skin around the genitals, so they are not fully protective.

Why get vaccinated against HPV?

The HPV vaccine prevents several cancers, including:

- Cervical cancer
- Penile cancer
- Anal cancer
- Cancer of the throat, including the base of the tongue and tonsils

All of these cancers come from HPV infections that did not go away. Cancer grows very slowly. The diagnosis may not be until years, or even decades, after a person gets HPV. The HPV vaccine also protects against genital warts.

How does the HPV vaccine work?

- The National Immunisation Service uses a vaccine called Gardasil9®.
- Gardasil9® protects against 9 types of “high-risk” HPV, including those which cause genital warts.
- HPV vaccination does not protect against other sexually transmitted infections.



How effective is the vaccine?

- The HPV vaccine works best before the person comes into contact with the virus, meaning before becoming sexually active.
- If administered at the right time, the vaccine will give protection lasting through the teenage years and adult life.
- Although the HPV vaccine is very effective, it does not protect against every HPV type. Females should also participate in cervical screening for the best protection against cervical cancer.



The HPV vaccine is available for free to all 12 and 13 year olds.

How is the HPV vaccine given?

- According to the National Immunisation Schedule the vaccine consists of 2 doses spaced at least 6 months apart.
- The vaccine should be given in the upper part of the arm.
- It is important that the course of vaccination is completed to achieve the best protection.

