

Immunisations at secondary school

Your questions answered

about the HPV, Td/IPV and MenC vaccinations
given between 12 and 14 years of age
(school years 8 to 9/10)



**Includes two-dose HPV schedule
from September 2014**



Introduction

This guide is for young people aged 12 to 14, and their parents or guardians. It explains:

- the immunisations that are given to young people, including the HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine for girls, usually when they are still at school
- why these immunisations are needed, and
- what side effects they might have.

The guide also answers some of the most common questions about these immunisations. In particular, it describes the HPV vaccine for girls that protects against cervical cancer and the Td/IPV vaccine that boosts the protection you got as a child against tetanus (T), diphtheria (d) and polio (IPV – inactivated polio vaccine). It also describes the MenC (Meningitis C) vaccine that is being introduced as a booster dose in early 2014.

If you have any questions or want more information, talk to your doctor, school nurse or the nurse at your doctor's surgery.

Details of other sources of information are given on page 17 of this booklet.

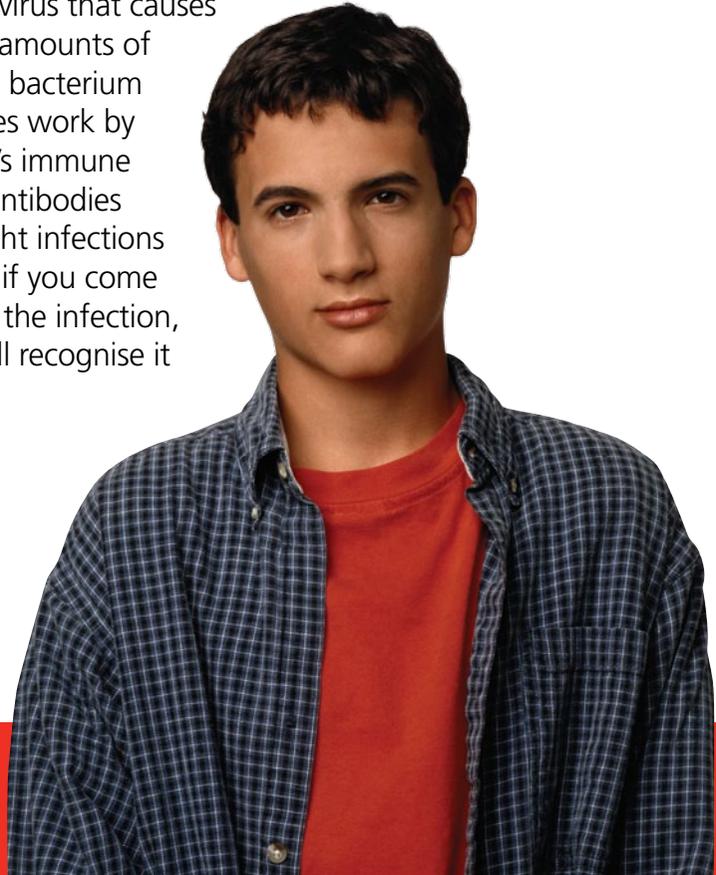
Your questions answered

Why do we need immunisation?

The national immunisation programme has meant that dangerous diseases, such as polio, have disappeared in the UK. But these diseases could come back – they are still around in many countries throughout the world. That's why it's so important for you to protect yourself. In the UK, diseases are kept at bay by the high immunisation rates.

How do vaccines work?

A vaccine contains a small part of the bacterium or virus that causes a disease, or tiny amounts of the chemicals the bacterium produces. Vaccines work by causing the body's immune system to make antibodies (substances to fight infections and diseases). So if you come into contact with the infection, the antibodies will recognise it and protect you.



Tetanus, diphtheria, polio and meningitis C

What is tetanus?

Tetanus is a painful disease affecting the nervous system which can lead to muscle spasms, cause breathing problems and can kill. It is caused when germs found in the soil and manure get into the body through open cuts or burns. Tetanus cannot be passed from person to person.

What is diphtheria?

Diphtheria is a serious disease that usually begins with a sore throat and can quickly cause breathing problems. It can damage the heart and nervous system, and in severe cases, it can kill.

What is polio?

Polio is a virus that attacks the nervous system which can cause permanent paralysis of muscles. If it affects the chest muscles or the brain, polio can kill.

What is meningitis?

Meningitis is inflammation of the lining of the brain, and can be the result of infection with a virus, bacteria, or other disease-causing organism, or as a result of injury. As well as meningitis, meningococcal infection can lead to septicaemia (blood poisoning), which can be very serious, especially if not diagnosed early, and can lead to death. See page 10 for a full description of meningitis and septicaemia.

If I was immunised against tetanus, diphtheria, polio and meningitis as a child, am I still protected?

You may still have some protection, but you need these boosters to complete your routine immunisations and give you longer-term protection.

How many boosters do I need to have?

You need a total of five doses of tetanus, diphtheria and polio vaccines to build up and keep your immunity. You should have had:

- the first three doses as a baby
- the fourth dose when you were between three and five years old, before you started school, and
- the fifth dose is due in year 9 (aged 13 to 14).

For protection against meningitis, you need a total of three doses. You should have had:

- the first dose at three months of age*
- the second dose at 12 to 13 months of age, and
- the third dose is due in years 9/10 (aged 13 to 14)

If you think you have missed any of your doses, talk to the school nurse or your doctor.

* Up until summer 2013, babies were also offered a dose of MenC vaccine at four months of age but research has shown that one dose in the first 12 months of life provides the same protection as two doses, so now only one will be given at this age.

Will I need more boosters in the future?

You will probably not need further boosters of these vaccines. However, you may need extra doses of some vaccines if you are visiting certain countries. Check with the nurse at your surgery.

How will I be given the Td/IPV and MenC boosters?

You will have two injections – one in each upper arm, or 2.5cm apart in the same arm. Nobody likes injections, but it is very quick. The needles used are small and you should feel only a tiny pinprick. If you are a bit nervous about having the injection, tell the nurse or doctor before you have it.

Are there any reasons why I should not be immunised?

There are very few teenagers who cannot have the Td/IPV and MenC vaccines.

You should not have the vaccines if you have had:

- a confirmed anaphylactic reaction to a previous vaccine, or
- a confirmed anaphylactic reaction to neomycin, streptomycin or polymyxin B (antibiotics that may be added to vaccines in very tiny amounts).

There are no other medical reasons why these vaccines should not be given. If you are worried, talk to the nurse or doctor.

What if I am ill on the day of the appointment?

If you have a minor illness without a fever, such as a cold, you should have the immunisations. If you are ill with a fever, put the immunisations off until you have recovered. This is to avoid the fever being associated with the vaccines and the vaccines increasing the fever you already have. If you have:

- had a bleeding disorder, or
- had convulsions (fits) **not** associated with fever

Speak to your doctor or nurse before having the immunisation.

Are there any side effects?

It is common to get some swelling, redness or tenderness where you have the injection. Sometimes a small painless lump develops, but this usually disappears in a few weeks. More serious effects are rare but include fever, headache, dizziness, feeling sick and swollen glands.

If you feel unwell after the immunisation, take paracetamol or ibuprofen. Read the instructions on the bottle carefully and take the correct dose for your age. If necessary, take a second dose four to six hours later. If your temperature is still high after the second dose, speak to your GP or call the free **NHS helpline 111**.

It is not recommended that these medicines are given before or after vaccination in anticipation of a fever.

Remember, if you are under 16 you should not take medicines that contain aspirin.

Do these vaccines contain thiomersal?

No. These booster vaccines do not contain thiomersal. Thiomersal is a mercury-based preservative. For more information about thiomersal, see www.nhs.uk/vaccinations.

Are these the only immunisations I need to have now?

When you are having your Td/IPV and MenC boosters, it's a good idea to check with the nurse or doctor that all your other immunisations are up to date (for example, MMR (measles, mumps and rubella), and, for some people, hepatitis B).

It's particularly important to check that your MMR immunisation is up to date because some teenagers have not had two doses of MMR.

If you have never had the MMR vaccine, you should have one dose now and another one month later. You may experience side effects from the MMR vaccine for up to six weeks after the immunisation. The symptoms are similar to those caused by the diseases, but much milder. Speak to your school nurse or doctor if you are at all concerned.

You should also talk to your doctor or school nurse if you are 'immunosuppressed' because you are having treatment for a serious condition such as a transplant or cancer, or you have a condition that affects your immune system, such as severe primary immunodeficiency. The doctor or nurse will get specialist advice on using live vaccines.

Knowing about meningitis and septicaemia

Meningitis is infection of the lining of the brain. The same germs that cause meningitis can cause septicaemia (blood poisoning). Meningitis and septicaemia are both very serious – they can cause permanent disability and death and the signs can come on quickly – so you must get treatment straight away. If you haven't been immunised against meningococcal group C (meningitis C), you should have this done now. This vaccine only protects against one type of meningitis and septicaemia, so you still need to know the signs and symptoms.

What do I look for?

Early symptoms of meningitis and septicaemia are mild and similar to those you get with flu (such as feeling hot, being sick, and pain in the back or joints). However, for **meningitis**, the most important signs to look out for are:

- a stiff neck
- a very bad headache (this alone is not a reason to get medical help)
- lights hurting your eyes
- vomiting
- a fever
- drowsy, less responsive, confused, and
- red or purple spots that don't fade under pressure (do the glass test explained on the next page).

For **septicaemia**, the most important signs to look out for are:

- sleepiness, less responsive or confused (a late sign in septicaemia)
- severe pains and aches in the arms, legs and joints
- very cold hands and feet
- shivering
- rapid breathing
- red or purple spots that don't fade under pressure (**do the glass test** explained below)
- vomiting
- a fever, and
- diarrhoea and stomach cramps.

What should I do?

If you get one or more of the symptoms above, get help urgently. If you get treatment for meningitis and septicaemia quickly, you stand the best chance of making a full recovery. If you can't get in touch with your doctor, or are still worried after getting advice, trust your own instincts and go to the emergency department of your nearest hospital or ask a friend to take you.

The 'glass test'

Press the side of a clear drinking glass firmly against the rash so you can see if the rash fades and loses colour under pressure. If it doesn't change colour, contact your doctor immediately.



Cervical cancer

What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer develops in the cervix (the entrance to the womb). It is caused by a virus called the human papillomavirus or HPV.

Cervical cancer can be very serious. After breast cancer, it is the most common women's cancer in the world. In the UK, around 3000 cases of it are diagnosed every year and about 1000 women die from it.

For more information, visit www.nhs.uk/vaccinations

What is HPV and how does it spread?

The human papillomavirus is very common and you catch it through intimate sexual contact with another person who already has it. Because it is so common, most people will get infected at some point in their lifetime. In most women the virus does not cause cervical cancer. But having the vaccine is important because we do not know who is at risk.

What is the HPV (cervical cancer) vaccine?

There are many types of human papillomavirus. The HPV vaccine protects against the two types that cause most cases (over 70%) of cervical cancer.

Because the vaccine does not protect you against all of the other types, you will still need to have smear tests (cervical screening that picks up early signs of changes in the cervix) when you are older.

Most girls who have the vaccination will reduce their risk of getting cervical cancer by 70%.



How will I have the vaccination?

You will need two injections. When you are in year 8 you will be offered the first injection. You will be called for the second injection six to 12 months after the first, but it can be given up to 24 months after. Your school or GP will inform you when you will actually have the second dose. It's important that you have both doses to be fully protected. The nurse will give you the vaccination in your upper arm.

The HPV vaccine is offered routinely to all girls starting in school year 8 (aged 12-13 years). The vaccine is recommended for all girls from the age of 12 years up to their eighteenth birthday.

Having this vaccine will also protect you against the two types of HPV that cause the majority of cases of genital warts. It won't protect you against any other sexually transmitted diseases such as chlamydia and it won't stop you getting pregnant.

Are there any side effects?

Like most injections, the side effects of the HPV vaccination are quite mild. Stinging and soreness in the arm are common but wear off in a couple of days. More serious side effects are extremely rare and the nurses know how to deal with them. The vaccine meets the rigorous safety standards required for it to be used in the UK and other European countries. See www.nhs.uk/vaccinations if you'd like more information on side effects.

Millions of doses of vaccine have already been given to girls in the UK.

What about giving consent?

You will probably want to share information about the vaccine with your parents and discuss it together. If you are being offered the vaccination at school, you may be given a consent form that your parent/guardian should sign giving permission for you to have the vaccination.

The doctor or nurse will discuss the HPV vaccine with you at your appointment and will be able to answer any questions you may have.

Other frequently asked questions about the HPV vaccination

I've heard you get a sore, swollen arm for a long time after the vaccination. Is that true?

The soreness and swelling you may get in your arm can last for a few hours, to a couple of days.

I missed my vaccination, can I still have it?

Yes. If you missed either of your vaccinations, for whatever reason, you should speak to your nurse or doctor about making another appointment. It's best to make your appointment as soon as possible after your original one. The most important thing is to have both doses – it's never too late to catch up.

Now I've had the injections, will I still need to go for smear tests?

Yes. All women are offered cervical screening (smear tests) when they are old enough (25 and over in England). The vaccine protects against the two human papillomavirus types that cause 70% of the cases of cervical cancer, so screening is still needed to try to pick up cervical abnormalities caused by other HPV types that could lead to cancer.

Should girls who have already had sex bother with the vaccination?

Definitely. If you've had sex, and are in the relevant age group, you should still have the vaccine.

I missed my appointment, what should I do?

Speak to your nurse to arrange another one. It is important that you have both doses at the right time to get the best protection.

Please don't forget that smear tests (cervical screening) will continue to be essential whether you have had the HPV vaccination or not.

My older sister had three doses, why am I only getting two?

Since the HPV vaccination programme started in the UK in 2008, the vaccine has proved to be very effective. Studies conducted since then suggest that two doses of the HPV vaccine will provide excellent, long-lasting protection for young girls and so countries, such as Switzerland, have moved to this new schedule. From September 2014, the HPV vaccination programme in the UK will consist of two doses of HPV vaccine.

What if I have not had my first HPV vaccine by the age of 15?

If you have not had any HPV vaccine by the time you are 15 years old you will need three doses to have full protection. This is because the response to two doses in older girls is not quite as good, so to be on the safe side you should have three doses, with the second dose given around a month after the first dose, and a final dose given around six months after the first dose. You should speak to your nurse or doctor about making an appointment as soon as possible.

What if I have had the first two doses of the old three dose HPV course, do I still need the third one now?

Yes. If you have started the three-dose course of HPV you should complete it as originally planned.

Where can I get more information?

For general information about teenage vaccinations, visit the website at www.nhs.uk/vaccinations

For non-urgent advice call the free NHS helpline 111

For information on meningitis

The following charities provide information, advice and support:

Meningitis Research Foundation

Free helpline 080 8800 3344
(9am to 10pm weekdays,
10am to 8pm weekends and holidays)
www.meningitis.org

Meningitis Now

24 hour helpline
0808 80 10 388
www.meningitisnow.org

For information on cervical cancer

Visit www.nhs.uk/vaccinations where you can download a question-and-answer sheet that gives more detailed information on the topics covered in this leaflet.

For more information about cervical screening visit www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk



© Crown copyright 2014
2902598 14ap 250k July 14 (ECL)
Produced by Williams Lea for Public Health England

First published July 2013

The text of this document may be reproduced without formal permission or charge for personal or in-house use.

If you need more copies of this booklet, please visit www.orderline.dh.gov.uk and quote *2902598/immunisations at secondary school* or contact DH Publications Orderline
Tel: 0300 123 1002
Minicom: 0300 123 1003 (8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday)

www.nhs.uk/vaccinations

Routine childhood immunisation programme from September 2014

Most vaccines are given as an injection in the thigh or upper arm. Rotavirus vaccine is given as drops to be swallowed and influenza vaccine as a nasal spray.

At what age to immunise	Diseases protected against	Vaccine given
Two months old	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio and <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b (Hib) Pneumococcal disease Rotavirus	DTaP/IPV/Hib and Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) Rotavirus
Three months old	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio and Hib Meningococcal group C disease (MenC) Rotavirus	DTaP/IPV/Hib, MenC and Rotavirus
Four months old	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio and Hib Pneumococcal disease	DTaP/IPV/Hib and PCV
Between 12 and 13 months old – within a month of the first birthday	Hib MenC Pneumococcal disease Measles, mumps and rubella (German measles)	Hib/MenC, PCV and MMR
Two, three and four years old	Influenza	Flu nasal spray (annual). If nasal spray unsuitable, inactivated flu vaccine will be used.
Three years and four months or soon after	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and polio Measles, mumps and rubella	DTaP/IPV or dTaP/IPV and MMR
Girls aged 12 to 13 years	Cervical cancer caused by human papillomavirus types 16 and 18 (and genital warts caused by types 6 and 11)	HPV
Around 14 years of age	Tetanus, diphtheria, polio and MenC	Td/IPV, MenC

Immunisations for at-risk children

At what age to immunise	Diseases protected against	Vaccine given
At birth (to babies who are more likely to come into contact with TB than the general population)	Tuberculosis	BCG
At birth (to babies whose mothers have hepatitis B)	Hepatitis B	Hep B
Six months to under two years	Influenza	Flu vaccine by injection (annual)
Two to under 18 years	Influenza	Nasal flu vaccine (annual). If nasal spray unsuitable, inactivated flu vaccine will be used.