

School-age and young people's vaccination

Vaccination is one of the safest and most effective ways to protect children and young people from serious infectious diseases. In Northern Ireland, a number of vaccines are routinely offered through school vaccination teams, helping to protect pupils and reduce the spread of infections within the wider community.

Vaccines offered through schools in Northern Ireland

Vaccine	Protection / Purpose	When Eligible	When offered
MenACWY vaccine	Protects against meningitis groups A, C, W and Y.	All Year 11 pupils	During the year 11 academic year
School Leaver Booster	Protects against tetanus, diphtheria and polio.	All Year 11 pupils	During the year 11 academic year
HPV vaccine	Helps protect against cancers caused by human papillomavirus (HPV), including cervical, throat, mouth, anal and genital cancers.	All Year 9 pupils (boys and girls)	During the year 9 academic year
MMR vaccine	Protects against measles, mumps and rubella.	Pupils who have missed one or both MMR doses	Opportunistically during school vaccination sessions in year 11 and 12
Flu	Protects against seasonal influenza (flu)	Primary 1 to year 12	Annually during the autumn term

Vaccine information

Key resources to help you make informed choices:

nidirect

- [Immunisation for teenagers between 14 and 18 years old | nidirect](#)

- [MenACWY vaccination for teenagers and students | nidirect](#)
- [Measles, mumps and rubella \(MMR\) vaccine | nidirect](#)
- [Flu vaccine for children | nidirect](#)

Vaccine knowledge project

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- Vaccine knowledge group

Flu vaccine

What is flu?

Flu is a highly infectious viral illness that spreads easily, particularly among children. Symptoms can include fever, cough, headache, muscle aches, sore throat and extreme tiredness.

Why is vaccination important?

Although many children recover quickly, flu can sometimes lead to serious complications, including bronchitis, pneumonia and hospital admission. Vaccinating children also helps protect vulnerable family members and reduces transmission in schools and communities.

How is it given?

Most children receive the flu vaccine as a quick and painless nasal spray.

For more information see:

- [Childhood immunisation Programme - nidirect](#)
- [Protecting your child against flu: Vaccination for you school child - PHA leaflet](#)

HPV vaccine

What is HPV?

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a very common virus that most people will encounter at some point in their lives. Some HPV types can cause cancers later in life.

Why is vaccination important?

The HPV vaccine provides long-lasting protection against the types of HPV responsible for most cervical cancers and many cancers of the mouth, throat, anus and genital

areas. Vaccination before exposure to the virus gives the best protection.

How is it given?

The vaccine is given as an injection in the upper arm and is routinely offered to all Year 9 pupils boys and girls.

For more information see:

- NI Direct - [HPV vaccine for adolescents aged 12 to 13 years old](#)
- PHA - [Help protect yourself: The essential guide to the HPV vaccination for all young people aged 12 to 13 and translations | HSC Public Health Agency](#)
- PHA - [The HPV vaccine: Questions and answers for parents of all young people aged 12-13 and translations | HSC Public Health Agency](#)

MenACWY vaccine

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal bacteria can cause meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and septicaemia (blood poisoning). These illnesses can develop rapidly and become life-threatening.

Why is vaccination important?

Teenagers and young adults have higher rates of carrying meningococcal bacteria. The MenACWY vaccine helps protect against four major groups of meningococcal bacteria: A, C, W and Y.

How is it given?

A single injection in the upper arm is routinely offered to Year 11 pupils through the school vaccination programme.

For more information see:

- NI Direct [MenACWY vaccination for teenagers and students | nidirect](#)
- NI Direct [Immunisation for teenagers between 14 and 18 years old | nidirect](#)
- PHA - [Teenage leaflet for those aged 14 to 18 years](#)

Teenage Booster (Td/IPV)

What does it protect against?

Tetanus – a serious infection affecting the nervous system, usually entering through cuts or wounds.

Diphtheria – a potentially fatal bacterial infection that can affect the nose, throat and heart.

Polio – a viral infection that can cause paralysis.

Why is vaccination important?

Protection from childhood vaccinations can reduce over time. This booster helps maintain immunity during adolescence and into adulthood.

How is it given?

A single injection in the upper arm is offered routinely to Year 11 pupils, usually at the same visit as the MenACWY vaccine.

For more information see:

- NI Direct [Immunisation for teenagers between 14 and 18 years old | nidirect](#)
- PHA – [Teenage leaflet for those aged 14 to 18](#) years

MMR Catch-Up Vaccine

What does it protect against?

Measles – a highly infectious disease that can lead to serious complications including pneumonia and encephalitis.

Mumps – an infection that can cause swollen glands and, occasionally, complications such as viral meningitis.

Rubella – usually mild but can cause serious birth defects if contracted during pregnancy.

Why is vaccination important?

Two doses of MMR are needed for full protection. Catch-up opportunities are offered through school vaccination programmes for pupils who have missed one or both doses.

How is it given?

The vaccine is administered as an injection in the upper arm.

For more information see:

- NI Direct [Measles, mumps and rubella \(MMR\) vaccine | nidirect](#)
- PHA – [MMR leaflet](#)

Consent and information for parents

Before a vaccination session takes place, parents and guardians will receive information about the vaccine being offered and how to provide consent. Information includes the benefits of vaccination, potential side effects and details about the vaccination session. School vaccination teams are available to answer questions and provide additional support where required. Eligible children will receive a consent form in school. Please ensure you check your child's school bag, complete and return the signed form to school.

Further Information

For further information on vaccines offered through schools in Northern Ireland, parents and young people can visit NI direct getting [the vaccine](#) and [consent](#).

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Related content

- [Childhood immunisation and vaccination](#)
- [School health](#)