

The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is being made available through GUM and HIV clinics in Northern Ireland to 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, the diseases that it will help to protect against and how to help protect yourself from genital warts and HPV associated cancers.

HPV vaccination record

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

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

**Remember to be protected,
you need all three doses**
(If you are under 15 years old
there is a two dose schedule)



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HPV vaccination for men who have sex with men (MSM)

**Protecting yourself
against warts and cancer**
caused by human papillomavirus



i mmunisation

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.

HPV infections which persist can lead to cancers, for example HPV types 16 and 18 cause the majority of HPV-associated cancers, notably anal, throat and penile in men and 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 vaccine we offer to MSM attending GUM/HIV clinics is called Gardasil. It protects against the four HPV types (6, 11, 16 and 18) that are responsible for causing cancers and genital warts.

The vaccine is a course of three injections over 4-12 months if you are 15 years or older up to and including 45 years old. If you are under 15 you only need two doses (six months apart).

What do I need?
From 15 to 45 years of age
1st dose
2nd dose at least one month after the first dose
3rd dose at least three months after the second dose and ideally within 12 months of the first dose
There is a two dose schedule for under 15 year olds

Ideally, vaccination should be 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 GUM/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 GUM/HIV clinics are known to have an increased risk of HPV infection and disease.

In the UK, a HPV vaccine programme for girls aged 12-13 has been in place since 2008. Vaccinating the majority of girls in the UK, means that their male partners get some protection too. However boys who grow up to become MSM will get far less of this protection.

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

The vaccine may also be offered to others attending GUM clinics who have a similar risk profile to that seen in MSM aged up to 45 years.

Is the vaccine safe?

Gardasil is a very safe vaccine. The vaccine meets the rigorous safety standards required for it to be used in the UK and other European countries. It has been used in the UK since autumn 2012 and more than three quarters of a million schoolgirls have received at least one dose of the vaccine. It has been given safely to millions more in Europe, the Americas and Australasia. HPV vaccine safety is taken seriously by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), and its safety is kept under continual review.

Does it have any side effects?

The most common side effects are soreness, swelling and redness at the site of the injection, similar to other common vaccines. More serious side effects are rare.

I'd like to have the vaccine. What do I do now?

Please ask your GUM/HIV clinic nurse or doctor for more details.

