

FACT SHEET ON NATIONAL SCHOOL-BASED HPV VACCINATION PROGRAMME 2019

1. What is HPV vaccination, what does it protect against, and who is recommended to receive the vaccine?

The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination provides protection against HPV infection, which is the most common cause of cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is the 10th most common cancer and 8th most common cause of cancer deaths among women in Singapore.

In Singapore, HPV vaccine is recommended for females aged 9 to 26 years old under the National Childhood Immunisation Schedule (NCIS) and the National Adult Immunisation Schedule (NAIS).

2. At what age should my child receive the HPV vaccination?

Females between the age of 9 to 26 years who had not been vaccinated previously may receive the vaccine.

Under the school-based programme, HPV vaccine will be offered to Secondary 1 female students (i.e. 12 to 13 years of age).

3. What type of HPV vaccines are available and which vaccine will be used for the school-based HPV vaccination programme?

Cervarix, which is one of the three types of HPV vaccines available in Singapore, will be used for the programme.

In addition to Cervarix, Gardasil and Gardasil 9 are also available in Singapore.

4. What is the difference between Cervarix, Gardasil, and Gardasil 9?

Cervarix and Gardasil provide comparable protection against HPV infection from two of the most common cervical cancer-causing HPV types - HPV types 16 and 18, which account for 70% of all cervical cancer cases. The other 30% of cervical cancers are caused by HPV types not covered in Cervarix or Gardasil. While Gardasil extends protection against HPV types 6 and 11, these HPV types do not cause cervical cancer.

Based on the submissions made by the vaccine manufacturers, Cervarix was selected for the programme following an assessment which included considerations on efficacy, price and stock availability. Gardasil 9 is a relatively new vaccine in Singapore, and is not included in the NAIS and NCIS. The Ministry of Health is evaluating it to compare to the other HPV vaccines.

5. When will my daughter receive the HPV vaccine?

The Health Promotion Board (HPB's) School Health Service will work with your daughter's school to schedule the HPV vaccination.

6. How many doses of the vaccine are needed, and when will they be given under the school-based programme?

For females 14 years or below

A total of *two* doses of the HPV vaccine is recommended for females who receive the first dose at age 14 years or below. For Cervarix, which is the vaccine to be provided under the school-based programme, the second dose of the 2-dose schedule can be given between 5 and 13 months after the first dose.

Under the school-based programme, the first dose will be given in Secondary 1 and the second dose the following year. Both the doses will be given in school.

For females 15 years or older

A total of *three* doses of the HPV vaccine is recommended for females who receive the first dose at age 15 years or above. The second dose of the 3-dose schedule can be given between 1 and 2.5 months after the first dose, followed by the third dose between 5 and 12 months after the first dose.

Under the school-based programme, the first and third dose will be given in school. Your child will be given an appointment at HPB's appointed service provider clinic to receive the second dose.

7. What should I do if my child misses her subsequent dose of HPV vaccine?

You should make an appointment for your child to be vaccinated at HPB's appointed service provider clinic as soon as possible.

8. Can I request for my child, after the first dose, to receive the subsequent dose earlier than scheduled?

HPB's School Health Service visits all schools on a yearly schedule. If you like your child to receive the subsequent dose at an earlier date, you will need to make your own arrangement with the HPB's appointed service provider clinic to receive the dose. You can email HPB_mailbox@hpb.gov.sg to request for the contact details of the appointed clinic.

The intervals between vaccine doses should follow the minimum interval between doses for the respective 2-dose or 3-dose schedule (Refer to Question 6). If the vaccine is given earlier than the minimum interval, the body may not generate adequate protection/immune response against HPV infection.

9. If my child has already started on a HPV vaccination series with vaccine type different from that offered by the school-based programme, can my child complete the vaccination series with the vaccine used in the school-based programme?

As far as possible, your child should complete the vaccination series with the same HPV vaccine type that your child has started on.

10. What are the possible side-effects of HPV vaccine?

HPV vaccine, as with any other vaccines, can result in side-effects. The common side-effects that may occur include:

- pain, swelling, itching, redness at the site of injection;
- mild to moderate fever;
- headache, muscle ache, joint pain;
- nausea, abdominal pain;

These are generally mild and resolve on their own. Parents should seek medical advice if your child continues to feel unwell after vaccination.

More severe side effects, such as an allergic reaction to the vaccine or vaccine component can occur, as with other vaccines. But these are extremely rare and normally occur immediately after the vaccination. Your child will be monitored for a short while following vaccination by the vaccination team who are equipped to manage such events.

11. Who can I contact for more information on school-based HPV vaccination programme?

For more information on school-based HPV vaccination programme, parents can email HPB_mailbox@hpb.gov.sg or call 6435 3895.

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March 2019