



Vaccine information

Read the information below carefully before signing the consent form. To learn more visit healthywa.wa.gov.au/immunisation

Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

What is the disease?

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common virus that affects both males and females. HPV is highly contagious and up to 90% of people who are sexually active will be infected with HPV at some point in their lives. The body usually clears the infection naturally and with most types of HPV, there are no symptoms. However, some types of HPV can cause genital warts and some types of the virus can persist in the body and over many years, cause cancers of the cervix, genital areas (vagina, vulva, penis) anus, and mouth and throat.

How is the disease spread?

HPV is spread through genital-skin to genital-skin contact during sexual activity with someone who has the virus. HPV virus is microscopic so can pass through tiny breaks in the skin. It is not spread through blood. Condoms offer limited protection against HPV, because they do not cover all of the genital skin.

Diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (dTpa)

Diphtheria is a contagious and potentially life-threatening bacterial infection that causes severe breathing difficulties, heart failure and nerve damage.

Tetanus is a severe, often fatal bacterial disease that affects the nervous system. People with tetanus suffer severe painful muscle spasms, convulsions and lockjaw. These spasms may affect the whole body, causing suffocation and heart failure. Even with modern intensive care as many as one in 50 people who get tetanus will die.

Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a highly infectious respiratory disease that can be life threatening in babies. About one in 125 babies under six months of age who catch pertussis will die from pneumonia or brain damage. Adolescents and adults with pertussis will suffer cold-like symptoms and can have a severe cough for up to three months.

Diphtheria bacteria can live in the mouth, nose, throat or skin on infected individuals. People can get diphtheria by breathing in the bacteria after an infected person has coughed or sneezed. People can also get diphtheria from close contact with discharges from an infected person's mouth, nose, throat or skin.

Tetanus is caused by bacteria found in soil and manure. The bacteria can enter the body through a wound as small as a pinprick. It cannot pass from person to person.

Pertussis, or whooping cough is very easily spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes the bacteria into the air which can then be inhaled by others close by. If untreated, a person with pertussis can infect others for up to three weeks after the onset of symptoms.

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Is the vaccine safe and effective?

Yes, Over 270 million doses of HPV vaccine have been given worldwide over the last decade, it is recommended by the World Health Organisation, and is safe and well tolerated. **HPV** immunisation works best when given at a younger age because the immune response is strongest and it is most effective when it is received before sexual activity starts. The HPV vaccine is 85–100% effective in preventing the main types of HPV infection that cause cancers and genital warts. All females who have received the HPV vaccine will still require regular screening for cervical cancer because the vaccine does not cover every HPV type.

Millions of doses of this vaccine have been given worldwide; it is safe and well tolerated.

What are the possible side effects and what can we do if they occur?

Common side effects

Pain/redness/itchiness/a small lump in the arm where the injection was given. For relief, apply a cool, damp cloth on the affected area

Less common side effects

Low grade fever, feeling unwell, nausea, headache.

For relief, affected people can take Paracetamol as directed on the label and drink extra fluids. If fever persists, see your GP.

Extremely rare side effect

Serious reactions are possible, but are rare. Examples include face swelling or difficulty breathing. As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing a serious injury or death.

If reactions are severe or persistent, seek immediate medical attention, and contact your local hospital.

Diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (dTpa)

The dTpa vaccine is very effective in preventing diphtheria and tetanus and about 80% effective in preventing pertussis.

This booster vaccine has lower concentrations particularly of diphtheria and pertussis components compared with the vaccine given in early childhood. The booster vaccine is safe and well tolerated.

Common side effects

Mild temperature (below 38°C)

For relief, take Paracetamol as directed on the label and drink extra fluids.

If fever persists, see your GP.

Pain/redness/itchiness/a small lump in the arm where the injection was given.

For relief, apply a cool, damp cloth on the affected area.

Extremely rare side effects

Brachial neuritis (inflammation of a nerve in the arm, causing weakness or numbness).

Serious reactions are possible, but are rare. Examples include face swelling or difficulty breathing. As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing a serious injury or death.

If reactions are severe or persistent, seek immediate medical attention, and contact your local hospital.