



UK Health  
Security  
Agency



# Adolescent vaccination programme Briefing for secondary schools

**This leaflet explains the NHS adolescent vaccination programme delivered to young people in secondary schools and the important role that schools play in its successful delivery.**





**We are very grateful for the support of schools in hosting vaccination sessions and in enabling communications to parents and young people to support the consent process. Delivering the programme through schools makes it more accessible to pupils, ensures timely protection, reduces inequality and results in higher vaccine uptake.**

Three vaccines are routinely offered to young people as part of a long-standing programme to protect them from serious and life-threatening preventable diseases:

- The HPV vaccine (which helps protect against cancers and other health problems caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV))
- The MenACWY vaccine (which helps protect against meningococcal groups A, C, W and Y which can cause meningitis and septicaemia), and
- The 3 in 1 teenage booster (which protects against tetanus, diphtheria and polio).

The measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine is also offered as a catch-up programme to young people if they have missed any doses when they were younger.

Each year, in the autumn term, flu vaccination is also offered as part of the Government's wider winter planning to reduce transmission and illness from flu.

The number of young people getting their routine vaccinations has fallen. It is essential that young people are offered the vaccines to provide them

with this important protection against these serious infections and, in the case of HPV, certain cancers.

The school aged immunisation service teams also offer catch-up opportunities to maximise vaccination uptake amongst those school aged children who remain unvaccinated. These teams may contact schools to book additional catch-up visits or they may offer any missed vaccinations alongside other routine school aged vaccinations offered in Years 8 and 9.

### Benefits to schools

- vaccines help provide a healthy environment through the reduction of vaccine preventable diseases in schools and in the wider community, including amongst the children's immediate and extended family
- vaccines reduce the likelihood of outbreaks in schools
- vaccines protect children which in turn reduces pupil and staff absence



# Frequently asked questions

## What vaccines are offered to young people?

**The flu vaccine** is an annual vaccination programme offered to those in Years 7 to 11. It helps protect those who receive it and reduces transmission of flu to the wider community. Most young people are offered a nasal spray vaccine which is quick and easy to administer and is the preferred flu vaccine for children and young people. A small number of children cannot have the nasal spray because of pre-existing medical conditions or treatments and are offered protection through an injected vaccine instead. The nasal vaccine contains a very small amount of highly processed porcine gelatine to keep the vaccine stable. For those who may not accept the use of porcine gelatine in medicines, a flu vaccine injection is available that does not contain gelatine.

**The HPV vaccine** is offered to boys and girls in Year 8 to protect against genital warts and HPV-related cancers such as cervical cancer, other genital cancers and cancers of the head and neck. Only one dose of HPV vaccine is now required to protect against HPV infection in this age group (unless individuals have specific health reasons, such as a severely weakened immune system, which may mean they require 3 doses).

**The MenACWY vaccine** is offered to young people in Year 9 and protects against meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal column) and septicaemia (blood poisoning) caused by meningococcal groups A, C, W and Y.

**The 3 in 1 teenage booster** is offered to young people in Year 9 and boosts protection against tetanus, diphtheria and polio. This is the final dose in a course of routine vaccine against these diseases and protects the young person into adulthood.

Ahead of vaccination sessions, **the MMR vaccine** status of the young person should be checked to see if any doses have been missed earlier in childhood. This vaccine is needed to provide protection against measles, mumps and rubella. If a dose has been missed this will be given by the school-aged immunisation team if they are able to, or a referral made to the young person's registered General Practice. It is particularly important that young people are protected against these diseases before they leave school and mix with others, e.g. university, college, armed forces, places of work etc.

## How can schools help to facilitate a successful vaccination programme?

The school aged immunisation team will try and keep disruption to a minimum and will only ask you to do the things that they cannot do themselves.

These could be written into a Memorandum of Understanding so that roles and responsibilities are clearly set out for the school and immunisation team.

As in previous years, schools will be asked to:

- work with the team to agree the best approach for implementing the programme in your school, this may include opportunities for the immunisation team to provide information sessions to parents/young people
- nominate a named contact to liaise with the team
- agree dates for the routine vaccination sessions or catch-up sessions as required
- provide class lists with contact details to support the offer to eligible young people
- agree a process for providing parents/guardians with the invitation letter, information leaflet and consent form
- encourage young people and their parents/guardians to look out for the consent form and return it by an agreed time
- send reminders through your usual channels such as email or text distribution lists, parent newsletters, visual display screens, parent evenings
- communicate these key public health programmes delivered in school on your website
- let parents know which day vaccinations will take place
- let young people know what will happen and answer any questions that they or their parents have on the logistics and date of vaccinations

Other practical considerations include:

- providing a suitable location for the vaccination to take place such as the school hall or large classroom
- ensuring the immunisation team can access the agreed space before the vaccinations are due to start, so they can set-up

## When does the vaccination take place?

Flu vaccination takes place in the autumn term. This is to make sure that young people are vaccinated before the flu virus circulates.

The other vaccines can be given at any time during the school year. Your school aged immunisation service will let you know when the other vaccinations will be offered. In some instances, it may be that the flu vaccination is provided at the same time as other vaccines such as HPV.

## Why does it matter if some young people are not vaccinated?

When a high percentage of the population is vaccinated, it is difficult for infectious diseases to spread, because there are not many people who can be infected. This is called 'herd immunity' and it gives protection to vulnerable people such as newborn babies, elderly people and those who are too sick to be vaccinated.

Herd immunity only works if most people in the population are vaccinated. Even with relatively high vaccination rates in England as a whole, this hides the fact that rates are much lower in some parts of the country and in some communities. If a young person lives in an area where vaccine coverage is low and they are not vaccinated, it's quite likely that many of the people they come into contact with will not be vaccinated either. If one of these people gets an infectious disease like measles, they can easily pass it on to the other unvaccinated people around them, and in some cases the disease can then spread very quickly through the population.

## Who gives the vaccine to the young people?

The programme is delivered by an NHS commissioned immunisation team which may include nurses, healthcare support workers, administrative staff, and other associated professionals who specialise in delivery of school-aged vaccinations. The team administers the vaccination according to nationally set standards. Staff have appropriate qualifications and training, including safeguarding training. All staff are DBS cleared.

## How does the immunisation team seek consent for vaccines?

The immunisation team, not the school, is responsible for the consent process and ensuring only children and young people with informed consent receive a vaccine.

- 1. Written consent.** Ideally, parents or carers provide written consent ahead of the vaccination session. The immunisation team will provide parents and carers with information about the vaccination and a consent form. They may ask you to send these to parents and collect the consent forms back in, or the team may use electronic consent forms. It is helpful if you remind parents to complete the form on time and to discuss the vaccination with their child, so wherever possible there is agreement on consent in advance of the vaccination session. Schools can also help by following up with any parents who have not returned a consent form and by returning any paper forms to the immunisation team by the agreed deadline.

- 2. Verbal consent.** If a parent or carer has not returned a consent form, the immunisation team will make every effort to contact them to seek verbal consent. It is important that schools share class lists with parent and carer contact details, to enable immunisation teams to do this. There is a lawful basis for sharing this data, which is explained in answer to the next question ('What data do I need to share with the immunisation team and does GDPR allow me to share that data?').
- 3. Self-consent.** If the parent or carer cannot be contacted, the immunisation team will speak to the young person to determine if they have sufficient maturity to provide their own consent (known as 'Gillick competency'). The immunisation team is responsible for assessing the appropriateness of administering the vaccine. It is therefore important for schools to allow all young people, not just those with returned consent forms, to have the opportunity to talk to the immunisation team on the day of the session.

Where a 16- or 17-year-old or a Gillick-competent young person consents to vaccination, a parent cannot override that consent. Likewise, if they refuse treatment, that refusal should be accepted, even where the parent has provided consent. If the health professional giving the immunisation feels the young person is not Gillick-competent, they would need to seek consent from someone with parental responsibility before vaccination could proceed.

## What data do I need to share with the immunisation team and does GDPR allow me to share that data?

You will need to provide data to support immunisation programmes in your school. This includes:

- sharing information leaflets and consent forms with parents or carers
- providing a list of eligible children and young people, and their parents' or carers' contact details to the school age immunisation team.

Sharing these contact details does not mean that a vaccine will be given. A parent or carer will need to give their consent for a vaccine to be given to their child.

There is a lawful basis for you to share information with school immunisation teams under article 6(1) (e) of UK GDPR. This states that the information can be shared if "processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller". This means that the school can share this information with immunisation programmes as it is in the public interest.



Sharing information with immunisation programmes is part of the exercise of a school's official authority. Schools also have a duty to support wider public health. Data protection laws do not prevent you from sharing personal data where it is appropriate to do so in a fair and lawful way, and in this instance, it is beneficial to do so.

### **How can schools help inform young people about vaccination?**

Schools have a key role to play in promoting uptake of the immunisation programme because of the relationship you have with the parents and young people.

Vaccinations are included in the health education curriculum as part of the 'health and prevention' topic at primary and secondary school. It is also a statutory requirement that pupils should be taught the facts and science relating to allergies, immunisation and vaccination.

Schools can provide opportunities for the team to share information with young people, parents and staff. This could be face to face at events such as parents evenings or assemblies or in the form of a pre-recorded information video.

The UK Health Security Agency have developed a range of teacher resources on germs and bacteria to support learning about microbes, infection prevention and control, antibiotics and vaccination. These resources are available on e-Bug ([www.e-bug.eu](http://www.e-bug.eu)).

There is also a lesson on the HPV vaccine co-produced by young people and researchers from the University of Bristol and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine available freely through the [PSHE Association website](#).

The British Society for Immunology has also produced educational resources for those in Key Stages 2 and 3 ([www.immunology.org/public-information/vaccine-resources/vaccines/activity-packs/educational-resources](http://www.immunology.org/public-information/vaccine-resources/vaccines/activity-packs/educational-resources))

Please use all your communication channels to help promote uptake and share this leaflet with staff in your school.

### **Are the information leaflets available in other languages?**

There are NHS leaflets and posters which provide more information on the vaccines offered in adolescence which are aimed at young people. Most of these are available in multiple languages and are free of charge. If there are a number of parents at the school for whom English is not their first language, let the immunisation team know and they may be able to provide translated versions of materials. Some leaflets are also available in Braille, British Sign Language (BSL), audio, large print and simple text.

### **What if a young person becomes unwell?**

If the immunisation team is still on site, seek advice directly from them. If the team have left the site, manage the situation according to existing policies for pupil sickness in school and contact the immunisation team to ensure they are aware and can report any event related to the timing of administration of the vaccine.

### **Can teachers get a flu vaccine?**

The nasal flu vaccine is not licensed for adults and teachers are not able to get a vaccine through the school aged immunisation programme.

Some staff will be entitled to a free NHS flu injectable vaccine if they have certain medical conditions that put them at risk from flu or are pregnant. Eligible staff should contact their GP practice or a participating pharmacy. See [www.nhs.uk/flujab](http://www.nhs.uk/flujab) for further information.

Schools may choose to provide flu vaccines for staff through an occupational health provider. Schools can also access this Crown Commercial Service Framework for flu vaccine vouchers or on-site provision of flu vaccines at competitive rates.

Staff who are uncertain about their vaccination status for flu or the other vaccines should discuss this with their GP practice.

### **What about those young people who miss the vaccination session in school?**

Young people who missed their HPV, MenACWY or teenage booster vaccine remain eligible and the immunisation team will provide opportunities for catch-up either as an additional visit to schools or as a community clinic appointment. Parents will be written to by the immunisation team to inform them of these catch-up opportunities or they can also contact the team to make an appointment.

GP practices are also contracted to offer these vaccinations. Children from the age of 14 who have missed their HPV, MenACWY and 3 in 1 teenage booster vaccines can receive these at their GP practice.

With the flu vaccine, any pupils who miss the session at school will be provided with further opportunities to get the vaccine (which may be at an alternative venue), the school aged immunisation service will be able to provide further details. For the small number of pupils who may be at increased risk from flu because of underlying health conditions, their parents have the option of requesting the vaccine from their GP practice if they prefer.

# Young people are offered the following vaccines in secondary school:

Vaccine	School year offered	Diseases protected against
Flu vaccine	Annual vaccine offered to all in Years 7 to 11	Protects against flu, which can lead to acute bronchitis and pneumonia
Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine	Year 8	HPV related cancers such as cervical cancer, some cancers of the head and neck, some genital cancers and genital warts
MenACWY vaccine	Year 9	Meningococcal groups A, C, W and Y (which can cause meningitis and septicaemia)
3 in 1 teenage booster (Td/IPV)	Year 9	Tetanus, diphtheria and polio
MMR – for those that have not had 2 doses of MMR	Catch-up – offered opportunistically	Measles, mumps and rubella

**Catch-up opportunities, either as additional visits or when the immunisation team is already coming into the school, may be offered for those who have missed out on their vaccinations.**

Further information on supporting immunisation in education and child care settings, including colleges and universities can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/supporting-immunisation-programmes](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/supporting-immunisation-programmes)



# Information resources for parents and young people



## MenACWY vaccination

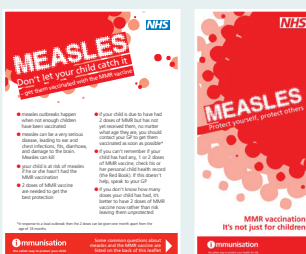
Leaflet: 'Protect yourself against meningitis and septicaemia with the MenACWY vaccine' [www.gov.uk/government/publications/menacwy-vaccine-information-for-young-people](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/menacwy-vaccine-information-for-young-people)

Leaflet: 'Meningitis: don't ignore the signs and symptoms' [www.gov.uk/government/publications/meningitis-signs-and-symptoms-poster](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/meningitis-signs-and-symptoms-poster)

Poster: "Protect yourself against meningococcal meningitis and septicaemia". Information for students in schools and sixth form colleges. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/meningitis-and-septicaemia-information-for-students](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/meningitis-and-septicaemia-information-for-students)

The leaflet and poster are available as translations and accessible versions. These are available to order and download for free.

NHS Website: [www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/menacwy-vaccine/](http://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/menacwy-vaccine/)



## Measles, mumps and rubella (catch-up) vaccination

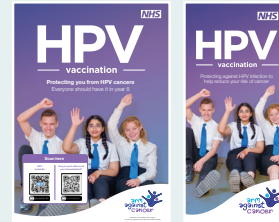
Leaflet: 'Measles: Protect yourself, protect others'

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-protect-yourself-protect-others](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-protect-yourself-protect-others)

Flyer: 'Measles: Don't let your child catch it' [www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-dont-let-your-child-catch-it-flyer-for-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-dont-let-your-child-catch-it-flyer-for-schools)

The leaflets are available as translations and accessible versions. These are available to order and download for free.

NHS website: [www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/](http://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/)



## HPV vaccination

Leaflet: 'HPV vaccination – Protecting against HPV infection to help reduce your risk of cancer'

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/hpv-vaccine-vaccination-guide-leaflet](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hpv-vaccine-vaccination-guide-leaflet)

An easy read version is also available: 'Easy Read Guide to the HPV vaccination'.

Poster: 'Don't forget to have your HPV vaccination' [www.gov.uk/government/publications/hpv-vaccination-programme-from-september-2014-poster](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hpv-vaccination-programme-from-september-2014-poster)

NHS Website: [www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/hpv-vaccine/](http://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/hpv-vaccine/)

EDUCATE resource: [pshe-association.org.uk/resource/educate-hpv-vaccine](http://pshe-association.org.uk/resource/educate-hpv-vaccine)



## Flu vaccination programme

Leaflet: 'Protect yourself against flu – information for those in secondary school'

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-leaflets-and-posters](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-leaflets-and-posters)

The leaflet is available as translations and accessible versions. These are available to order and download for free.

Poster: '5 reasons to vaccinate your child against flu poster for secondary schools'

Translations of this poster are available. This poster and translations are available to order and download for free.



## 3-in-1 teenage booster (tetanus, diphtheria, polio)

Leaflet: 'A guide to the 3 in 1 teenage booster (Td/IPV) vaccine' [www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-the-3-in-1-teenage-booster-tdivp](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-the-3-in-1-teenage-booster-tdivp)

Translations of this leaflet are available. These are available to order and download for free.

NHS website: [www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/td-ipv-vaccine-3-in-1-teenage-booster/](http://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/td-ipv-vaccine-3-in-1-teenage-booster/)



[www.nhs.uk/vaccinations](https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations)

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