

# Help your child with disability get the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine

This factsheet is about:

- the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine
- how to help your child with disability get all their vaccines at school.

Getting vaccinated is part of growing up.

## What is human papillomavirus?

Human papillomavirus or HPV is a very common virus.

A virus can spread between people. Sometimes a virus makes you sick.

HPV can spread through genital skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity.

HPV can affect people of all genders.

HPV usually has no symptoms and goes away. But sometimes it can cause illnesses like cancer and genital warts.

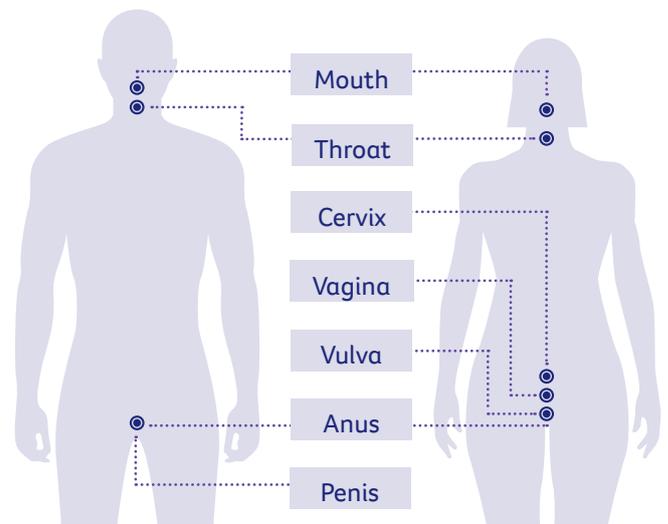
## The HPV vaccine can help protect your child

Most people will have an HPV infection at some time in their lives.

The HPV vaccine works best if you have it when you are younger.

## The HPV vaccine protects against:

- over 90% of cervical cancers
- most other HPV-related cancers, such as cancer of the anus, penis, vagina, vulva and throat
- genital warts.



## The HPV vaccine is free

Young people aged 12 to 13 can have the HPV vaccine at school for free.

People can get the HPV vaccine for free up until they turn 26.

## Most people only need one dose of the HPV vaccine

People with lower immunity may need more doses.

# Help your child with disability get their vaccines at school

Planning for your child's individual needs can help make school vaccinations smoother.

## STEP 1: Learn about the vaccines your child can get at school for free

Young people usually have three vaccines at school.

When they are 12 to 13 they get:

- a vaccine for HPV
- a vaccine for diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis. Pertussis is also called whooping cough.

When they are 14 to 16 they get:

- a vaccine for meningococcal ACWY.

## STEP 2: Decide with your child whether to get the vaccines at school

Nurses from the local council will visit your child's school to give the vaccines.

Most young people will have their vaccines at school. But for some, vaccination at school might not be the best option.

Some places offer vaccinations in different ways, such as:

- in a low sensory environment
- with more space
- allowing more time
- with sedation if needed.

**To find out more about these options, talk to your doctor or local council immunisation service.**



## STEP 3: Return the vaccine consent form to the school

The school will send an information pack and a vaccine consent form either online or home with your child.

You can help the consent process by:

- filling in and signing the consent form
- adding comments about your child's needs, for example, what supports they may need on the day
- returning the consent form to the school.

Your child can't get the vaccines unless you give all the information the consent form asks for.

You need to return the consent form even if your child won't be getting the vaccine at school.

## STEP 4: Prepare your child for vaccination day

Your child might feel anxious about getting the vaccination. You can help prepare them by explaining:

- that the vaccine will help keep them healthy
- what will happen on the day, step-by-step, by using a social story like the one on our website [hpvvaccine.org.au/disability](http://hpvvaccine.org.au/disability)



## What if my child misses out on a vaccine?

If your child misses out on a vaccine at school, it's important they catch up as soon as they can. They can catch up at a local council immunisation service, doctor or at some pharmacies.