

Facts about HPV Vaccine and Cervical Cancer



Published by National Immunisation Office August 2017

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS)

- Has been known for over 200 years.
- Is 3-4 times more common in females and younger teenagers.
- Is the commonest cause of prolonged school absence.
- It is estimated that there are about 10,000 cases in Ireland.
- The estimated rate in Ireland is 0.2-0.4% so at least 440-880 cases would have been expected in 230,000 vaccinated girls in Ireland.
- The reported numbers are, in fact, lower than expected.
- Scientific studies in the UK (2013) and Norway (2017), a worldwide review by the European Medicine Agency (2015) and WHO (2017) have shown CFS is not linked to HPV vaccine

Impact of HPV vaccine

- HPV vaccines are more than 99% protective against infection with cancer-causing HPV virus types.
- HPV vaccines are most effective when given at the age of 12 to 13 years and will provide protection throughout adulthood.
- Countries with high vaccine uptake rates have seen the best impact.
 - In Scotland 90% of girls have been vaccinated since 2008. There has been a 90% decrease in HPV infections in vaccinated girls which is even better than expected.
 - Precancerous growths of the cervix have been reduced by more than 50% in countries such as Australia, Sweden and Scotland.
 - In Australia, Gardasil vaccine has prevented 1 in every 2 new cervical cancers.

Worldwide, regulatory authorities report no increase in any long-term medical condition in vaccinated compared to non-vaccinated girls.

Why does the HSE request that only HSE information should be given to parents?

Parents should receive information that is

- scientifically accurate and endorsed by national and international expert and regulatory bodies.
- in line with HIQA guidance "Communicating in Plain English" (July 2015).

The information in the HSE leaflet

- includes all the known scientifically proven side effects from HPV vaccine.
- is prepared from the licensed documentation for the vaccine and provides links where parents can go to read further information.
- is presented in clear simple language and approved by the National Adult Literacy Agency so that it can be easily understood.
- provides links to further information on the vaccine including the Patient Information Leaflet.

Why are HPV (and other) vaccines given in schools?

- There is scientific evidence that vaccine uptakes are much higher when they are given in schools, especially among adolescents.
- Countries that have seen the best impact of HPV vaccine such as Scotland and Australia have school based programmes.

- The World Health Organization recommends that school age vaccines are given in schools (most recently in May 2017).
- Giving vaccines in schools promotes equality. All students have equal opportunity to be vaccinated.

Older girls in school can still get the vaccine – they should contact the HSE school vaccination teams.

The World Health Organization strongly recommends HPV vaccination to prevent cervical cancer.

Visit www.hpv.ie for more information.