



**INFORMATION ON VACCINATION  
AGAINST HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS (HPV)  
with Gardasil 9®**

Dear parents or guardians,

HPV is short for human papillomavirus and refers to a larger group of viruses. The infection-causing viruses are spread through direct contact of mucous membranes, for example during sexual activity or during birth, when the virus is passed on from mother to child. Certain types of the virus (HPV types 6 and 11) can cause infectious, rapidly growing skin lesions in the genital area (condylomata/genital warts). The cancer-causing types of HPV, types 16, 18, 31, 33, 45, 52 and 58, are the main cause of precancers and cancers of the cervix (cervical carcinoma) and the genital area. These HPV types are also involved in the development of malign tumours in the mouth and throat area. Cervical cancer is the second-most common type of cancer and the third-most common cause of cancer death in women in the world.

The HPV vaccine protects against infection with those virus types that are the most common cause of HPV associated cancers and genital warts. Since the risk of getting HPV and developing a disease affects women and men equally, Austria's free childhood vaccination programme offers the HPV vaccine to girls as well as boys. The vaccine is most effective when it is given before any contact with HPV, i. e. ideally before becoming sexually active. Moreover, studies have clearly revealed that children of this age group showed the strongest immune response to the vaccine. The antibodies developed after vaccination can optimally prevent the virus from entering the cells in the body and thus prevent infection. The studies available so far suggest that the vaccine provides long-lasting protection. The duration of protection is being investigated by ongoing international studies; currently, this has not yet resulted in any recommendations regarding a booster vaccination.

HPV can be transmitted both by women and by men. Giving the vaccine to girls as well as boys will effectively break the infection chain and lead to a general decrease in the number of people getting diseases or precursor conditions linked to HPV.

The vaccine is offered free of charge to all girls and boys who are living in Austria and are in school year 4 as part of the current school vaccination programme. In addition, the vaccination is available for children and young people between 9 and 30 years of age (up to 21 years of age from 1 January 2026 when the campaign ends) at the vaccination centres of Municipal Department 15 – Public Health Services and at the surgeries of doctors participating in the childhood vaccination programme.

**Please turn over – Thank you!**

**Vaccine**

The vaccine mainly contains purified inactive proteins of HPV types 6, 11, 16, 18, 31, 33, 45, 52 and 58, which trigger active immunisation, i.e. they stimulate the body to produce antibodies. Between 9 and 30 years of age (up to 21 years of age from 1 January 2026 when the campaign ends), the vaccine is given in two doses at least 6 months apart. It is an intramuscular vaccine and is usually given as an injection into the upper arm.

**Side effects**

Like other medicines, vaccines can also cause unwanted side effects. Together with this information sheet you will also receive the patient leaflet for the vaccine, which contains information about its composition, possible contraindications and side effects. Please report any reactions and side effects, especially such which are not listed in the patient leaflet, to your doctor immediately.

For women it is still important to attend cervical screening ("smear test") appointments. Vaccination does not replace regular cervical cancer screening (Pap smear tests), since the vaccine protects against the most common and most dangerous, but not against all types of HPV.

**Getting vaccinated**

A vaccination can only be performed by the school doctors of Municipal Department 15 – Public Health Services if the child's parents/guardians have signed and submitted the consent form. However, your consent does not guarantee that your child will automatically be vaccinated. This decision is made by the doctor on the basis of the information you have provided. If your child has been ill or has received any other vaccination in the period of time between filling in the consent form and the actual vaccination appointment, please tell the doctor or your child's class teacher before the vaccination. The school will inform you of the vaccination date in good time.

**PLEASE HAVE YOUR CHILD BRING ALL VACCINATION DOCUMENTS**

(health passport, vaccination passport, vaccination card)

This will help the doctor to check which vaccine your child needs.

THANK YOU!