

## General questions about the HPV vaccine

### >> What is HPV?

HPV stands for Human Papillomavirus. There are around 200 types of HPV. Some of these HPVs are transmitted between individuals through sexual relations. They infect the genital or anal area or around the mouth. Sexual contact is sufficient for transmission, there does not need to be penetration.

This virus is very common and highly contagious. Almost all individuals who have had sex have already been in contact with HPV.

Most of the time the body will eliminate the virus by itself after a certain time. But in some cases the viruses can remain and after several years can cause diseases such as cancer, in men and in women.

### >> What is the HPV vaccine and how does it protect you?

The HPV vaccine is a vaccine that protects against 9 very common types of HPV virus, which are responsible for different types of cancers: cancer of the cervix, uterus, vagina, penis, anus, oral cavity, oropharynx and tonsils.

The HPV vaccine also protects against benign tumours caused by certain types of HPV: condyloma, also known as genital warts.

### >> At what age is vaccination recommended?

It is strongly recommended to vaccinate boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 14, before they begin to be sexually active, with a two-dose vaccination schedule.

It is still possible to be vaccinated between the ages of 15 and 19, with a three-dose vaccination schedule.

The vaccine is preventive: it is not effective against infections that are already present, only those that may occur after vaccination. This is why it is important for boys and girls before they become sexually active.

### >> Why have the vaccination in middle school?

This vaccination is offered in middle school, to pupils in year 8, so as to include as many individuals as possible. This organised vaccination is convenient for parents, since they don't need to make an appointment with their doctor. It is completely free of charge.

With this middle school vaccination operation, the health authorities hope to achieve a good vaccination coverage rate, which will help reduce spread of the virus and the number of related cancers in France.

## **>> How will the vaccination be organised?**

The vaccination will be organised within the middle school and all the necessary equipment and infrastructure will be installed. A doctor will always be present during vaccination sessions to check that everything runs smoothly and to answer questions.

## **>> What are the side effects?**

As with all vaccines, the HPV vaccine can cause certain adverse effects.

Very common side effects (more than 10% of people vaccinated)

- Pain at the injection site
- Slight redness at the injection site (where the needle penetrates the skin)

Common side effects (less than 10% of people vaccinated)

- Fever, muscle or joint pain

Uncommon side effects

- Fainting

Rare side effects

Allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis which can include the following: skin lesions swelling of the eyes and/or face difficulty breathing or swallowing low blood pressure loss of consciousness

## **Practical questions about vaccination in middle school**

### **>> How much does the vaccination cost?**

Vaccination will be completely free of charge for individuals receiving it as part of this middle school campaign.

It can also be done at another time, with a prescription from a doctor or midwife. In this case the national health insurance will reimburse 65% of the cost.

Supplemental health insurance usually covers the remaining 35%. Vaccination may be free of charge in certain vaccination centres, for example in sexual health or vaccination clinics operated by the City of Paris.

### **>> How will the vaccination proceed in the middle school?**

Vaccination is completely free of charge and not mandatory, and will take place in the middle school, performed by health professionals. The vaccination

campaign will begin in October for the first injection. The second injection will take place in the same conditions, starting in April.

**>> What do we need to provide for this vaccination in middle school?**

In order for your child to be vaccinated, both parents must have completed the parental permission form which will be sent to you. If one of the parents cannot sign (for example the parent is away from home for an extended period), the parent signing must tick a box to certify that she/he has authorisation from the other parent.

On the day of the vaccination, the child must present their health record, otherwise they cannot be vaccinated.

**>> Are you going to give my child other vaccines?**

No, the only vaccination to be done is for HPV. If during the session the doctor notices that your child is not up-to-date with their other vaccinations, you will be informed. It will be up to you to contact your doctor or to go to one of the vaccination centres operated by the City of Paris.

**>> Where and to whom can I ask questions on other subjects related sexual health?**

For any questions about the HPV vaccine, you can

- Ask your doctor
- Come to the meetings held by the middle school A doctor or nurse will usually be present to answer questions from parents. Other information meetings will be held, contact your local town hall or your child's middle school for more information.
- Come and visit the Vaccination centres, the Health centres or the Sexual health centres run by the City of Paris: no appointment is needed.

**>> I don't have health insurance/I don't have papers: can my child get the vaccination?**

All children in year 8 can receive the vaccination, completely free of charge.