



5 REASONS TO GET THE HPV VACCINE

Effective protection against cancer.

The HPV vaccine protects against nine types of HPV that cause around 90% of HPV-related cancers — including cervical, vaginal, vulvar, penile, anal, and oropharyngeal cancers — as well as against genital warts.

The vaccine works best before exposure.

HPV is often transmitted during a person's first sexual contact. That's why vaccination before becoming sexually active is essential.

It protects boys and men too.

In men, HPV can cause oropharyngeal, anal, and penile cancers. Men can also carry and transmit the virus, so vaccination helps protect both them and their partners.

The vaccine is safe and effective.

HPV vaccines have been in use since 2006 and have been thoroughly researched. For example, cervical cancer rates have dropped significantly in Australia, where girls have been vaccinated since 2007 and boys since 2013. Common side effects are mild and temporary.

Vaccine acts as a safety shield.

If enough young people get vaccinated, the whole society will be safer - the disease will have far less chance to spread.

If you have any questions, please consult your family nurse or family doctor.

Family doctor's helpline **1220**

vaktsineeri.ee
terviseportaal.ee



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PROTECT YOUR FUTURE!

HPV is a widespread virus that poses a risk to all young people. Most unvaccinated individuals become infected with some type of HPV during their lifetime, often without even realizing it.

Vaccination against HPV is a safe and effective way to prevent diseases and cancers caused by the virus.

TERVISEKASSA 



TERVISEAMET

Myth

Reality

"Children aren't sexually active, so there's no need to vaccinate them so young."

The HPV vaccine works best before exposure to the virus, which is why early vaccination is so important.

"HPV only affects women."

HPV affects men too – it can cause cancer and other serious health problems in males. Boys and men can also spread the virus to others.

"The vaccine can affect fertility."

Studies have shown no link between the HPV vaccine and fertility problems.

"The vaccine is new and not well studied."

The HPV vaccine has been in use since 2006 and has been thoroughly studied for both safety and effectiveness.

"If I've already had HPV, there's no point in getting vaccinated."

The vaccine protects against several types of HPV. Even if you've had one type, the vaccine can still protect you from others.

MORE THAN 80% OF PEOPLE BECOME INFECTED WITH HPV DURING THEIR LIFETIME

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is widespread in Estonia. There are over 150 different types of HPV, and most people become infected with at least one type during their lifetime.

HPV IS EASILY TRANSMITTED

HPV is most commonly transmitted during sexual intercourse, and infection can occur as early as the first sexual contact. Around 25% of young people contract HPV within a year of becoming sexually active.

However, infection can also occur through intimate skin-to-skin contact. Most sexually active individuals will get HPV at least once in their lifetime.

The virus shows no visible symptoms, making it impossible to tell who is infected. This makes HPV easy to spread. It can remain in the body for years without the person knowing they are infected.

Virus types are divided into high-risk, cancer-causing, and low-risk categories. In most cases, the immune system clears the virus on its own within a few months to a few years.

HPV CAN CAUSE CANCER

In some people, the body is unable to clear the virus, and HPV can remain in the body for a long time. When that happens, the virus can cause changes in cells that may eventually develop into cancer. This process can take several years or even decades.

Each year, more than 300 people in Estonia are diagnosed with HPV-related cancer, and around 3,200 people are diagnosed with precancerous conditions. Most HPV-related cancers include cervical cancer in women and head and neck cancers, which are more common in men.

HPV CAUSES OVER 98% OF CERVICAL CANCER CASES

Estonia has the highest incidence and mortality rates of cervical cancer in Europe. In addition to HPV vaccination, participation in screening is essential. In Estonia, women

aged 30–65 are invited to cervical cancer screening every five years. Screenings are free for women in the target group, including those without health insurance, and are performed at healthcare facilities across the country. It is also possible to order a home HPV test.

Most HPV types cause harmless skin changes like warts or genital warts. These may be unpleasant, but they are not life-threatening. However, certain high-risk types of HPV can cause cancer such as cervical, anal, penile, vaginal, vulvar, and oral cancers. The HPV vaccine offers protection specifically against these dangerous, cancer-causing strains.

VACCINATION PROTECTS AGAINST BOTH DISEASE AND INFECTION

HPV vaccination prevents more than 90% of HPV-related cancers and provides long-term protection against the virus.

The more people who are vaccinated, the fewer HPV-related cancer cases there will be in the future.

Studies show that HPV vaccination significantly reduces the number of HPV-related cancer cases. Experience from other countries confirms that when enough people are vaccinated, the spread of HPV decreases across the entire population. In several countries, a decline in cervical cancer rates has already been observed among vaccinated generations. Vaccination plays a vital role in building a healthier, safer future for everyone.



HPV VACCINATION IS FREE FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE !

Vaccination is most effective before any exposure to the virus and before the start of sexual activity – ideally between the ages of 12 and 14. However, it can still provide protection later. That is why all young people up to the age of 18 can receive the HPV vaccine free of charge.

PARENTAL CONSENT IS REQUIRED FOR VACCINATION

Vaccination usually takes place at school, where the school nurse requests written consent from the parent or guardian of a minor. In justified cases, vaccination can also be carried out at a family doctor's office. Parents under the age of 18 do not need parental consent. From the age of 18, it is also possible to receive the HPV vaccine at many pharmacies across Estonia.

THE HPV VACCINE IS SAFE AND EFFECTIVE

In Estonia, the HPV vaccine is administered as a single dose. According to the latest research, one dose is sufficient to provide long-term protection against HPV infection and the cancers it can cause. The vaccine is injected into the muscle of the upper arm.

The HPV vaccine is safe – the most common side effects are mild and temporary:

- Pain at the injection site
- Redness
- Swelling

Less commonly, fever, headache, or muscle pain may occur, which usually subside within a few days.

In case of fever or headache, paracetamol or ibuprofen can be taken to relieve symptoms. If the symptoms persist for more than a few days or become more severe, you should contact the school nurse or your family doctor.