



Don't Wait, Vaccinate!

HPV (Human Papillomavirus)

What you should know about HPV

What is HPV?

The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections in Canada. HPV is a virus that spreads easily. It affects about 3 out of 4 sexually active Canadians, at least once in their lifetime. Teens are particularly at risk of contracting it once they are sexually active.

What happens when you have HPV?

HPV affects both men and women. For some people, HPV infection goes away on its own and does not cause any health problems. When HPV does not go away, certain types of the virus can cause genital warts and other types can cause cancer. HPV is the most common cause of cervical cancer in women.

What are the symptoms of HPV and how does it spread?

Genital warts appear as one or many small bumps in the genital area. They can be itchy or uncomfortable. Cancers caused by HPV have various signs and symptoms such as bleeding, itchiness or pain.

Some people don't have any signs or symptoms of HPV and can pass it on to others without even knowing it. HPV is spread during vaginal, oral, or anal sex or during intimate skin-to-skin contact with an infected partner.

SYMPTOMS OF HPV:

- Genital warts (anus, vagina, or on the penis)
- No signs or symptoms

COMPLICATIONS OF HPV:

- Cancer of the cervix or vagina
- Cancer of the anus
- Cancer of the penis
- Lesions on the nose, tongue and mouth
- Cancer of the mouth and throat

How do you prevent HPV?

The best way to prevent genital warts and cancer from HPV is to get immunized.

Using condoms or oral barriers, not smoking (smoking makes the body less able to fight off HPV and is a risk for many cancers), and limiting the number of sexual partners can lower your risk of getting HPV.

How is HPV found and treated?

Talk to your health care provider about HPV. HPV vaccines prevent infection from the most common types of HPV linked with cancer, but not all. It's important that all sexually-active women have a regular Pap test that looks for cervical cancer.

Genital warts can be diagnosed by visual inspection and removed by your health care provider.

There is no cure for the HPV virus.



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What you should know about the HPV vaccine

What is the HPV vaccine?

There are three HPV vaccines currently approved for use in Canada: Gardasil, Gardasil 9 and Cervarix. Each vaccine protects against different types of HPV. More than one dose is needed for full protection.

For girls and women:

Females between 9 and 45 years of age can be vaccinated with Cervarix, Gardasil or Gardasil 9 to prevent HPV-related cervical cancer. Gardasil and Gardasil 9 may also help prevent HPV-related vaginal and anal cancers, as well as genital warts.

For boys and men:

Gardasil and Gardasil 9 are approved for use in males between the ages of 9 and 26 to help prevent HPV-related anal cancer and genital warts.

How well does the HPV vaccine work?

The vaccines available in Canada help to prevent some types of HPV, including the ones that cause 70 to 90% of anal and genital cancers and 90% of genital warts.

What are the benefits of HPV vaccination?

The HPV vaccine is very safe. It has already been given to millions of girls, boys and adults. The vaccine can help protect people from HPV-related genital warts and cancer.

Who should get this vaccine?

In Canada, HPV vaccination is recommended for females aged 9 to 45 and for males aged 9 to 26. For best protection from the vaccine, it should be given before someone becomes sexually active.

Where can I get the HPV vaccine?

The vaccine given will depend on the province or territory you live in; all provinces and territories have publicly-funded, school-based HPV vaccination programs for girls 9 to 13 years of age (grades 4 to 8). Most vaccination programs also include boys. To find out more, speak to your health care provider or your Public Health Unit.

What are the possible side effects?

Most people have no reaction to the HPV vaccine. In some cases, there may be some redness, swelling or pain at the injection site. Occasionally, people may have one or more of the following symptoms: light-headedness, dizziness, nausea, headache, muscle or joint pain and fever.

Talk to your health care provider about how to help relieve any symptoms after vaccination.

Where can I get more information?

Canada.ca/vaccines

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