

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Program For Grade Eight Females

What is HPV?

- HPV is a common virus that has over 100 strains
 - Some strains of HPV cause changes in the cervix that can lead to cervical cancer. There are about 400 deaths each year in Canada due to cervical cancer
 - Other strains of HPV cause genital warts, which are usually painless but might be itchy, uncomfortable and hard to get rid of
- Both males and females can be infected with HPV
- Many people with HPV do not have any symptoms and can spread the virus without knowing it
- There is no cure for HPV, but the body's immune system can usually clear the virus on its own

How does HPV spread?

- HPV spreads through sexual contact or skin-to-skin contact in the genital area with an infected person
- About 75 percent of people who have had sex have been exposed to HPV

How can HPV infection be prevented?

- Not having sex is the best way to avoid HPV. The risk of being exposed to HPV increases with having sex at an early age, having many sex partners, or having sex with someone who has had many partners
- Using condoms gives *some* protection, but HPV might be on the skin that is not covered by the condom
- Getting vaccinated with Gardasil[®] protects against four strains of HPV. Three injections are needed over a period of a few months to provide full protection. This vaccine is given as a needle in the upper arm

What is Gardasil[®]?

- It is a vaccine that prevents infection with four strains of the human papillomavirus (HPV)
- It helps to protect against cancer of the cervix and genital warts
- It is recommended for females between the ages of nine and twenty-six
- It is currently being provided by the provincial government at no cost for all females in grade eight through school clinics

How effective is Gardasil[®]?

- Gardasil[®] is almost 100 percent effective in protecting against four strains of HPV
 - It protects against strains 16 and 18, which cause 70 percent of cases of cervical cancer in Canada
 - It also protects against strains 6 and 11, which cause 90 percent of the cases of genital warts
- The vaccine's protection lasts for at least five years. A booster shot may be needed later in life
- Gardasil[®] is most effective if it is received *before* becoming sexually active. The vaccine can provide some protection if sexual activity has already taken place, but it is less effective in females who have been infected with HPV, depending on the strain
- This vaccine does not protect against all types of HPV

Note: Once becoming sexually active, regular Pap tests are still needed to screen for cervical cancer, even if Gardasil[®] has been received.

What are the side effects of Gardasil®?

The HPV vaccine is safe and well tolerated. It has been approved for use in Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Brazil and the European Union. Experts in each of these countries carefully review the safety data before a vaccine is approved for use. If side effects occur, they are usually mild, such as pain, swelling, itchiness and redness where the shot was given.

Some people may have a headache, fever, nausea and swelling of the throat and nose passages. Rarely, there may be side effects such as throat spasms, inflammation or infection of the gastrointestinal tract, swollen glands, high blood pressure, vaginal bleeding and reduced arm movement where the shot was given. Allergic reactions are rare but may include difficulty breathing, hives, and rash. See a health care provider immediately if a serious reaction occurs following vaccination.

Who should not get HPV Vaccine?

The vaccine should not be given to anyone who:

- has already been fully vaccinated with Gardasil®
- has had a bad reaction to a previous dose of Gardasil®
- is fighting an infection, unless it is a simple cold
- has an allergy to any of the ingredients (yeast, aluminium, sodium chloride, L-histidine, polysorbate 80, sodium borate)
- has a complicated health condition
- is pregnant

If your child has already received Gardasil®, please call the Immunization Information Line at 1-877-794-1880 to update your child's records or fill out the information in the attached consent form.

What else should you know about HPV vaccine?

- At this time, Gardasil® is available free of charge only to females in grade eight through the school immunization program. All other females aged 9 to 26 can see their doctor to obtain the vaccine, although they will have to pay \$400 to \$500 for the three shots. Some health insurance plans may cover the cost of the vaccine.
- The vaccine is not currently licensed for males, but studies are on-going to see if males can benefit from this vaccine.

Before giving Gardasil®, nurses from York Region Health Services Nurses will ask your daughter about the following:

- her health on that day
- her general health status
- any allergies to vaccines or medications
- any medications that she is taking
- any problems with getting vaccines in the past
- any previous HPV vaccination

On the day of the clinic, please have your daughter

- wear a short sleeve shirt to make vaccination easier
- eat a good breakfast or lunch before the clinic
- if your child is sick or changes her mind, she will be able to get vaccinated at a HPV community clinic.

For further information, please call Vaccine Preventable Diseases information line:
1-877-794-1880, press 9 or visit www.york.ca