

HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS (HPV) VACCINE INFORMATION

(HPV-9 VACCINE -GARDASIL9[®] VACCINE)

What is HPV and how does it spread?

- HPV is a very contagious virus that commonly infects males and females. It has more than 100 strains, including about 40 strains that affect the anogenital area. 8 out of 10 Canadians become infected with HPV during their lives. Teens and young adults have high rates of HPV infection.
- HPV can cause cancers of the anus, rectum, throat, oral cavity, cervix, vagina, vulva, and penis, as well as genital warts. Females who develop HPV cancer or precancer may require treatment that could limit their ability to have children.
- Although most HPV infections would go away on their own within two years, infections that do not resolve can cause cancer or warts. Many people with HPV do not have any symptoms and can spread the virus without knowing it.
- HPV infections are transmitted by intimate skin to skin contact (through oral, vaginal, or anal sex) and can be transmitted to an infant exposed to the virus in the mother's genital tract. Almost every unvaccinated person who is sexually active will get HPV at some time in their life.

How can HPV be prevented?

- Getting immunized is a safe and effective way to protect against HPV infection. The HPV-9 vaccine protects against nine diseases-causing strains of the virus: strains 6, 11 (can cause genital warts) and types 16, 18, 31, 33, 45, 52, 58 (can cause cancer). Vaccinating at a younger age is better as the HPV vaccine works best when given before exposure to the virus.
- The risk of HPV infection may be reduced by practicing safer sex for those who are sexually active. However, condoms do not fully protect against getting HPV.

How effective is the HPV-9 vaccine?

- The HPV-9 vaccine works very well. Immunization against the strains contained in the HPV9 vaccine can prevent about 90% of high-risk cervical precancers, 87% of cervical cancers, 84% of anogenital cancers, and 90% of genital warts. The HPV-9 vaccine prevents cancers in both males and females.

What are the side effects of this vaccine?

- The HPV vaccine is safe and generally well-tolerated. The most common side effects are redness, pain and swelling at the injection site that are mild and short-lived. These side effects mean your immune system is responding to the vaccine and building up protection. Apply ice to the site and/or take a non-aspirin pain reliever to help minimize pain and/or swelling. Serious reactions are rare.
- Students are observed for a minimum of 15 minutes after their vaccination to ensure there are no immediate side effects. Anyone who experiences serious health effects after they leave the clinic should consult their doctor and notify York Region Public Health.

More about the HPV-9 (Gardasil 9[®]) vaccine

- Ontario students in grades 7-12 are offered the HPV-9 (Gardasil 9[®]) vaccine at no cost. In addition, as part of Ontario's student immunization catch up, males and females who graduated high school in 2022, as well as females that graduated in 2021 & 2020 are also able to receive HPV vaccine for free up until August 31, 2023. After that date these groups of graduated students would need to purchase

the HPV9 vaccine for vaccination at their health care provider's office. This vaccine is strongly recommended for students.

- Gardasil 9® is a two dose series if your child receives their first dose before the age of 15. Three doses of the vaccine are needed if your child is 15 years or older at the time of their first dose.
- Get protection early, be vaccinated at the earliest opportunity. If your child misses being vaccinated in school, they can still receive HPV9 vaccine at a York Region Public Health community clinic. Visit york.ca/immunization for clinic information.

Who should NOT get this vaccine at school and should consult their health care provider?

- Those who have had a severe reaction to a vaccine (e.g., anaphylaxis)
- Those who have an illness or take any medication that weakens the immune system
- Those with previous severe allergic reaction to previous HPV vaccine or any of its specific components or container (e.g. yeast, aluminum, sodium chloride, L-histidine, polysorbate 80, sodium borate)
- Pregnant individuals should wait until after pregnancy to start or complete the vaccine
- Individuals younger than 9 years of age or older than 45 years of age
- Vaccination should be postponed in persons with moderate or severe acute illness. Persons with minor acute illness may be vaccinated if not under isolation for COVID-19.