

Where can I get an HPV vaccine?

- You can get a vaccine from a clinician (contact information for PPT's clinic for youth is below). They will write a prescription for you. You take that prescription to the pharmacy, purchase the vaccine, and bring it back to your clinician to receive the injection. You will do this a total of 3 times, once per shot.
- If you are not going directly from the pharmacy back to your clinician to get the vaccine injected, the vaccine must be stored in the refrigerator.
- Women can also purchase the Gardasil vaccine and receive the injection at the Bay Centre for Birth Control. Call 416-351-3700 to book an appointment.

Remember

- If you have a cervix, you still need annual Pap tests even if you get an HPV vaccine.
- The vaccine **does not** protect you from other STIs or the strains of HPV not covered by the vaccine.
- Make informed decisions. Talk to your partner(s) about STIs and the use of safer sex tools.
- Use condoms on penises or dildos for vaginal or anal sex, use latex gloves for finger play and use dams for oral sex to lower your chances of getting STIs.

For further information or to book an appointment:

For youth ages 13-29 - Planned Parenthood Toronto Health Services

Offers drop-in and scheduled appointments
Call 416-961-0113 or visit www.ppt.on.ca.

Teen Health Source

Offers anonymous and confidential sexual health information for teens by teens.
MSN chat TeenHealthSource@hotmail.com, email TeenHealthSource@ppt.on.ca,
call 416-961-3200 or visit www.TeenHealthSource.com.

For women - Bay Centre for Birth Control

Offers drop-in and scheduled appointments
Call 416-351-3700

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HPV Vaccines (Gardasil or Cervarix)



Human papilloma virus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the world. You may have heard that there are vaccines that can help prevent some strains of HPV. How do they work? Should you get one? Are they safe? Below is some information about HPV and the vaccines to help you decide if a vaccine is right for you.

What is HPV?

- HPV stands for human papilloma virus.
- It is transmitted through skin-to-skin contact, particularly genital skin-to-skin contact, with someone who already has HPV.
- There are over 100 strains (kinds) of HPV, around 40 of which affect the genital and anal (butt) area.
- Genital HPV infections are usually cleared up by the immune system on their own over time. However, when the virus is not cleared, it remains in the body and can cause health problems.
- Low-risk HPV can cause genital warts, little bumps that can grow on the penis*, anus (butthole) or on the outside and inside of the vagina* (see the HPV factsheet for more information).
- High-risk HPV can cause changes to the cells in the cervix (the opening to the uterus) that can lead to cervical cancer. It can also lead to anal, penile, vulvar (the genital area outside the vagina) and mouth cancers.
- The majority of people with HPV do not show any symptoms of HPV and most people don't even know they have it.
- It is estimated that 75% of Canadians will have HPV at some point in their lives.

*if you use different terms to describe these parts of your body, please tell your clinician.

From Choice, a World of Possibilities



How can you get tested for HPV?

- There is no special test for low-risk HPV (warts). A clinician can tell if you have warts by looking at any bumps you may have in and around your genitals and anus.
- A Pap test involves a small brush that sweeps the cervix to collect a sample of cells. The cells are then examined to see if there are any changes likely caused by high-risk HPV.
- A Pap test in the rectum (butt) is also available, but it is not commonly done.
- There is currently no test that detects changes in the cells, caused by HPV, inside the penis, mouth, or throat.

What is the vaccine?

- There are 2 HPV vaccines available in Canada:
 - **Gardasil:** this vaccine offers over 98% protection against the 4 most common strains of HPV: 2 low-risk strains (that can cause genital warts) and 2 high-risk strains (that can lead to cervical and other cancers.)
 - **Cervarix:** this vaccine offers over 98% protection against the 2 most common strains of high-risk HPV (that can lead to cervical and other cancers.) It does not offer protection against any strains that cause genital warts.
- Both vaccines trigger your immune system's response to the virus. The vaccines **do not** give you an HPV infection.
- Both vaccines are given by injection, usually in the upper arm.
- A series of 3 shots are given: one shot immediately, one shot 2 months later and then a final shot 4 months after that. You must have all 3 shots of the same vaccine for it to be effective.
- Studies show that the vaccines last for at least 5 years, if not longer.
- The most common side effects of getting an HPV vaccine are a sore arm and redness or swelling at the site of injection.
- Less common side effects are fever, nausea, stomach upset and fainting shortly after the injection. The likelihood of having side effects is lower than with most other vaccines.
- No serious or life-threatening side effects of the vaccines have been documented.

- The vaccines **do not** treat any HPV you may already have (ie: any existing genital warts or any abnormal Pap test results already received).
- The base (adjuvant) of the Gardasil vaccine is aluminum hydroxyphosphate. The Cervarix vaccine is also aluminum based. Research has found that the quantities of the bases used in the vaccines are not harmful to people.
- The vaccines are not "live" vaccines, which means there is no way you can get HPV from getting an HPV vaccine.

Who can get an HPV vaccine?

- In Canada, the Gardasil vaccine is approved for girls and women** 9-45 years of age and boys and men** 9-26 years of age.
- The Cervarix vaccine is approved for girls and women 10-25 years of age.
- If you are interested in a vaccine but you don't fit these categories, talk to your clinician.
- In Ontario, Grade 8 girls **IN SCHOOL ONLY** are offered the Gardasil vaccine free of charge (the cost is covered by OHIP).
- For everyone else, the cost of the Gardasil vaccine is approximately \$140 per dose, plus dispensing fee and taxes (just under \$500 total for all 3 shots). The cost of Cervarix is approximately \$90 per dose, plus dispensing fees and taxes (just under \$350 for all 3 shots). You can only purchase one dose at a time.
- Both vaccines are covered by many insurance plans.

Should I get an HPV vaccine?

- Different people have different opinions about vaccines. It is important that you make your decision based on good information and according to your own values.
- The best time to get the vaccine is before you've become sexually active. However, the vaccine is still useful for people who are already sexually active. The likelihood that someone who is sexually active has already had all of the strains of HPV that the vaccines prevent is approximately 1/1000.

**the terms men/women/boys/girls refer to physical sex not gender identity.