

HPV Vaccine Facts

What is HPV?

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is a very common virus. 75% of Canadians will have at least one HPV infection during their lifetime.

There are several types of HPV. Some cause warts. Others cause cervical changes including cervical cancer.

For more information, see our brochure, *HPV Human Papilloma Virus: What Everyone Should Know about Genital HPV*.

What is the HPV Vaccine?

An HPV vaccine, Gardasil, was approved for use in Canada in July 2006. This vaccine provides protection against 4 types of human papilloma virus: HPV 16, 18, 6 and 11.

HPV 16 and 18 cause over 70% of all cervical cancers. HPV 6 and 11 cause 90% of all genital warts.

The vaccine is given in 3 doses over 6 months. It cannot be used to treat existing HPV infection.

Who should get the vaccine?

The vaccine has been approved for use in females between the ages of 9 and 26.

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization recommends the use of Gardasil for:

1. Females between 9 and 13 years of age before they start having sexual contact, and
2. Females between 14 and 26, who may:
 - have already been sexually active,
 - have been exposed to HPV infection, or
 - have already had previous Pap test abnormalities.

Who should not get the vaccine?

The use of Gardasil is not recommended for:

- females under the age of 9, or
- pregnant women.

The vaccine is not licensed in Canada for men, but this option is being studied.

What is the HPV Immunization Program?

In the 2008-2009 school year, Manitoba Health and Healthy Living will introduce a vaccine program for grade six girls. It is voluntary. The vaccine will be given by public health nurses.

Before any female student is immunized, parents and legal guardians will receive:

- information about HPV and the vaccine, and
- a consent form.

How effective is the vaccine?

The vaccine is most effective when given to women before they start having sexual contact.

If you receive the vaccine before exposure to HPV 16, 18, 6 and 11, it will be almost 100% effective in preventing infection from these 4 types.

If you have previously been infected with one of these 4 types, the vaccine will still protect you against the remaining 3 types.

The vaccine will not protect you against infection from other low and high risk HPV types.

Do I still need Pap tests if I have had the vaccine?

Yes. You will still need to have regular Pap tests as the vaccine does not protect you against all types of HPV that can cause cervical cancer.

How safe is the vaccine?

Gardasil is safe. In recent studies, very few side effects were reported. The most common side effects were soreness, pain and swelling where the vaccine was injected.

In one study of 11,640 recipients, there were 5 reports of serious side effects that may have been due to the vaccine. These side effects were:

- bronchospasm (difficulty breathing),
- gastroenteritis (swelling of the stomach and intestines causing discomfort, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting and sometimes diarrhea),
- headache and hypertension (high blood pressure),
- vaginal hemorrhage (bleeding),
- injection site pain and difficulty in moving.

During this study, 10 people died. None of these deaths was considered to be vaccine-related. These deaths were caused by trauma, suicide, pulmonary embolus, infection, cancer, a complication of cesarean section, and an arrhythmia.

What is in the vaccine?

The Gardasil vaccine contains proteins that act like the HPV virus. The body starts making antibodies and white blood cells to fight against these virus-like particles. This builds up immunity to the HPV virus as well.

There is no active virus in the vaccine. Nor are there any antibiotics or preservatives, such as mercury or thimerosal.

Is there a cost for the vaccine?

The HPV vaccine is free for grade six girls through the HPV Immunization Program.

The vaccine is not free for women outside the program. You can buy the vaccine through your health centre. You may need a prescription. Talk to your doctor about how to get the vaccine.

Where do I find more information?

For the HPV Immunization Program,

- visit www.gov.mb.ca/health/hpv/, or
- call (204) 788-6737.

For the HPV vaccine, see <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/07pdf/acs33-02.pdf>.

For HPV, Pap tests, and the MCCSP,

- visit our website, www.cancercare.mb.ca/mccsp/,
- call us at 788-8626 or toll free at 1-866-616-8805, or
- see the following brochures:
 - *HPV: What Everyone Should Know about Genital HPV,*
 - *Pap Tests: Understanding Your Results, or*
 - *Registry: Facts & Information.*



Manitoba Cervical Cancer Screening Program
Unit 5-25 Sherbrook St. Winnipeg, MB R3C 2B1
788-8626 or 1-866-616-8805
www.cancercare.mb.ca/MCCSP/

