

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine

Immunization protects you from disease. Get protected, get immunized.

- Vaccines make your immune system stronger by building antibodies, which help prevent diseases.
- Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get this disease.

Who should have HPV vaccine?

This vaccine is given to Grade 5 students and any Grade 9 students who did not receive it in Grade 5. Children who were offered HPV vaccine in Grade 5 or 9 and did not get it are eligible for free HPV vaccine until the end of Grade 12.

Some adults 26 years of age and younger with certain health conditions may be offered the vaccine.

Some adults who have not had HPV vaccine may benefit from this vaccine, but it is not free. Talk to your doctor, to find out if it is a good idea for you. Check with your health insurance provider as some plans may cover it.

How many doses of this vaccine are needed?

People need 3 doses, which are given over 6 months.

How well does the vaccine work?

After the 3 doses are given, HPV vaccine is up to 99% effective in preventing HPV related disease from the 9 strains in the vaccine. These 9 strains cause up to:

- 95% of cervical cancers
- 97% of anal cancers
- 57% of penile cancers
- 85% of vaginal cancers
- 90% of genital warts

The 9 strains cause most, but not all HPV-related diseases. Females still need to have regular Pap tests once they start having sexual contact.

HPV vaccine works best in children and teens before they have any sexual contact (e.g., oral sex, intercourse).

Where can I get the vaccine?

HPV vaccine (Gardasil® 9) is offered to Grade 5 and any Grade 9 students who have not had HPV vaccine. Information about the disease and the vaccine will be sent to the parent/guardian. If you want your child to get the vaccine, you must fill out the consent form and return it to the school.

Adults who want the vaccine and need to pay for it should contact a travel health clinic (e.g., [AHS Travel Health Services](#)), or speak to their doctor or pharmacist.

Are there side effects from HPV vaccine?

Reactions to the vaccine are usually mild and go away in a few days. They may include:

- redness, swelling, bruising, and discomfort where the needle was given
- headache or dizziness
- fever
- feeling tired or having body aches
- nausea, stomach pain, or diarrhea
- sore throat

It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after immunization because people can have a rare but serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

Unusual reactions can happen. Call Health Link at 811 to report any unusual reactions.

How can I manage side effects?

- To help with discomfort and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area.
- If you need fever or pain medicine, check with your pharmacist or doctor. Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 19 years old because it can cause serious health problems.
- Some people with health problems (e.g., weak immune system) must call their doctor whenever they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your doctor—even if you think the fever was due to immunization.

Is there anyone who cannot have HPV vaccine?

You may not be able to have the vaccine if you:

- have an allergy to parts of the vaccine—always tell your healthcare provider about allergies.
- had a severe or unusual reaction after this vaccine (or a similar one)—always tell your healthcare provider if you have had reactions.
- are pregnant.

You can be immunized if you have a mild illness (e.g., cold), even if you have a fever.

You need to get all 3 doses of HPV vaccine before you try to get pregnant.

For More Information



Go to hpvtool.albertapreventscancer.ca to help you decide about the HPV vaccine



Call Health Link at **811**



Go to immunizealberta.ca



Go to myhealth.alberta.ca

Quick Facts: HPV

What it is

- virus that causes skin and genital warts
- often, HPV infection will go away on its own. Some people get a long-term infection which can lead to cancer of the cervix, vagina, vulva, penis, anus, mouth, and throat
- HPV causes almost all cervical cancer

Who is most at risk

- anyone can get HPV, even if they have had only 1 sexual partner. It is very common and without immunization about 3 out of 4 people would get infected
- the risk is higher for people with a weak immune system and people with lifestyle risks of infection (e.g., many sexual partners, tobacco or marijuana use, etc.)

How it spreads

- spread by sexual contact or skin-to-skin contact in the genital area
- can spread to a baby during childbirth if the mother is infected