



Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the world today. Approximately 75% of sexually active Canadians will have at least one HPV infection in their lifetime. The rate of HPV infection is highest among people aged 15 -24.

People can pass HPV through:

- » oral, genital, or rectal skin-to-skin contact
- » sex toys
- » child birth (rare)

Most HPV infections clear up without treatment within a few months. Almost 90% go away on their own within two years.

There are more than 100 known types of HPV. At least 40 types cause genital warts or cancer.

The HPV vaccine used in Canada protects against nine types of HPV: Types 6, 11, 16, 18, 31, 33, 45, 52, 58. Two of these types cause 90% of genital warts. Seven of them cause cancer more often than other types of HPV.

When given before exposure to the virus, the vaccine can prevent HPV infections that cause approximately:

- » 90% of all cervical cancers
- » 60% of all penile cancers
- » 90% of all anal cancers
- » other genital cancers (vulva, vagina)
- » 90% of all genital warts
- » cancers of the head and neck

The HPV vaccine is less effective if someone has already had sexual contact.

The vaccine will not stop cancer from forming if there is already an HPV infection. It will still prevent infections from other types of HPV.

It's not clear yet if the vaccine provides life-long protection or if (or when) a booster shot may be needed to maintain protection against HPV subtypes.

Canada introduced HPV vaccines in 2006. The long-term effects are still not known. Ongoing studies monitor its safety.

Since 2006, the rates of HPV types that cause HPV infection and genital warts have decreased. Rates of cancer related to the HPV types that cause cancer have not yet decreased.

It is important to have regular Pap tests/HPV screenings, even if you have the vaccine. It does not protect against all types of HPV that can cause cancer. Pap tests help screen for cancer and some sexually transmitted infections.

In Manitoba, the HPV vaccine free to people of all genders eligible for the provincial immunization program. For more information, visit: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/vaccineeligibility.html> for more information about eligibility