

# Human Papillomavirus Vaccine

Vaccines have saved more lives in Canada in the last 60 years than any other medical intervention. Vaccines help your immune system to recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause diseases.

## 4 types of the human papillomavirus (HPV) are vaccine preventable.

- HPV is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections (STIs). There are over 100 types of HPVs.
- HPV types 16 and 18 can cause mouth, nose, throat and anal cancers in males and females, cervical and vaginal cancers in females and penile cancer in males.
- HPV types 6 and 11 cause over 90% of genital warts in females and males.
- It is estimated that 75% of sexually active females and males will have at least one HPV infection during their lifetime, with the highest prevalence observed in women aged 20-24 years.
- HPV is spread by close contact during sexual activity with someone who has HPV.

## What can happen when a person has a HPV infection?

- Anyone who is sexually active can get a HPV infection.
- Most people do not show any signs or symptoms and can pass HPV on to others without knowing it.
- Usually, a HPV infection will go away on its own. For some people, the body cannot fight the HPV infection and the infected cells can develop cancer.

- **It is very important for women to get regular Pap tests once they become sexually active.**
- **The HPV vaccine cannot protect against other sexually transmitted infections.**

## How can HPV infections be prevented?

- Be immunized. The vaccine is almost 100% effective against four of the most common HPV types.
- Abstinence from all sexual activity is the only way to prevent getting or spreading a HPV infection.
- Delay sexual activity (wait until you are older).
- Limit the number of sexual partners you have and always use condoms.

## Who can get this vaccine for free?

- **Girls in Grade 6** because they are best protected before they become sexually active.

### Notes:

- Females born since January 1, 1996 can get this vaccine for free until they turn 27 years old by making an appointment at the local health centre.
- HPV vaccines are recommended for other individuals, but are not available for free. Individuals can speak with their health care provider about privately purchasing HPV vaccines.

## Who should not get this vaccine?

- **A mild illness, with or without fever, is not a reason to avoid immunization.**
- Persons who have a serious illness, with or without a fever, should delay immunizations.
- People who had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of any HPV vaccine, or any components of the vaccine.
- Pregnant females.

## What are common reactions to this vaccine?

- Vaccines are very safe and effective. It is much safer to get this vaccine than to get a HPV-related cancer or genital warts.
- Temporary soreness, redness and swelling at the injection site
- Headache or a fever.
- These reactions are mild and may last 1 to 2 days.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. **If this happens after you leave the clinic, call 911 or the local emergency number.** This reaction can be treated, and occurs in less than one in one million people who get the vaccine.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol, Tempra) may be given for fever or soreness. ASA (Aspirin) must NOT be given to anyone younger than 18 years old because of the risk of Reye syndrome.

## Who should you report reactions to?

- Report any adverse or unexpected reactions to your local public health nurse, your doctor, or nurse practitioner as soon as possible.

### Talk to a public health nurse:

- If you have questions or concerns about your or your child's reaction to an immunization.
- If you had to take your child to a doctor, a hospital or to a health centre with a symptom that might be related to immunization.

**For more information contact your local public health office, your physician, nurse practitioner, HealthLine online or by calling 811.**

## What does the vaccine contain?

**GARDASIL®** contains HPV types 6, 11, 16, and 18. It also contains amorphous aluminum hydroxyphosphate sulphate, sodium chloride, L-histidine, polysorbate 80, sodium borate and water for injection. Thimerosal-free and latex-free.

## Mature Minor Consent

It is recommended that parents/guardians discuss consent for immunization with their children. Efforts are first made to get parental/guardian consent for immunizations. However, children at least 13 years of age up to and including 17 years of age, who are able to understand the benefits and possible reactions for each vaccine and the risks of not getting immunized, can legally consent to or refuse immunizations in Saskatchewan by providing mature minor informed consent to a healthcare provider.

To ensure that a complete immunization record is maintained, every immunization administered to an individual will be documented by Public Health into the electronic provincial immunization registry, known as Panorama. Panorama is a secure electronic system used in Saskatchewan to record and manage immunization records and the health information related to immunization for all Saskatchewan residents. Immunization records may be shared with other health care professionals to provide public health services; assist with diagnosis and treatment; and to control the spread of vaccine preventable diseases. Information about Panorama is detailed in the "Protecting the Privacy of Your Immunization Record" fact sheet.

Reference: GARDASIL® (2015) product monograph.