

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine

What is HPV?

- HPV is a common virus found in both males and females. It causes diseases of the genital area and can develop into cancer of the cervix, vagina, vulva, penis, anus, mouth,
- Eight out of ten Canadians become infected with HPV during their lives,
- Each week in Ontario, ten women are diagnosed and three die from cancer of the cervix. It is the 2nd most deadly cancer in women.

How do you catch HPV?

- HPV is spread by skin to skin contact during intimate activity with an infected person,
- Some people never get symptoms but they will still carry the virus and can pass it on to others.

HPV shot (Gardasil)

- This shot is effective in preventing infection by the four types of HPV which cause most cancers of the cervix and genital warts.
- The HPV shot is given in the arm. It is given as a series of three shots. The first shot is given and then the second is given one to two months after the first shot. The third shot is given four to six months after the first shot.
- The HPV shot is safe for females 9-45 years of age and males 9-26 years of age.

You should not get the HPV shot if you:

- Have an allergy to any ingredients of the vaccine (yeast, aluminum, L-histidine, polysorbate 80 and sodium borate),
- Are pregnant or breastfeeding.

What to expect after the shot

- Some individuals may get pain, swelling, itchiness and/or redness where the shot was given. It is common to have a fever, nausea, dizziness, headache or feel tired after a shot,
- More serious side effects are rare and should be reported to your health care provider right away. These symptoms may include: trouble breathing, swelling of the face or mouth, a fever higher than 39°C, hives or rash.