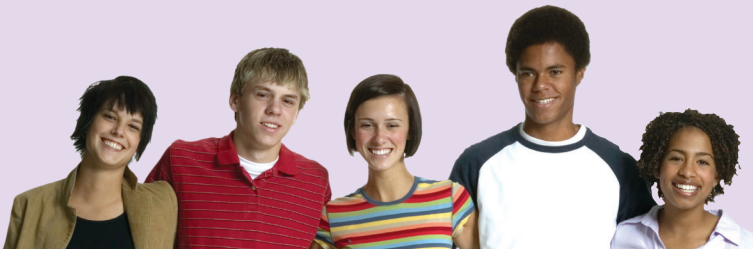
HPV vaccine (Gardasil®)



FACTS

What is HPV?

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a very common virus with more than 100 types. Of the many types of HPV, there are two types that are important causes to most cases of cervical cancers and another two types that are responsible for 90 per cent of genital wart infections. Some HPV infections can cause rare cancers of the penis, anus, vulva and vagina. Gardasil® helps protect against these dangerous types of HPV.

How is HPV spread?

The virus spreads through intimate skin-to-skin contact.

More than 50 per cent of sexually active men and women become infected with HPV at some time in their lives. Most infected persons do not realize they are infected or that they are passing the virus on to a sexual partner.

What are the symptoms of HPV?

Most people with HPV do not develop symptoms. Cervical cancer and other HPV-related **cancers** might not have signs or symptoms until they are advanced and hard to treat. For this reason, it is important for women to get regular screening for cervical cancer.

Why should we vaccinate against HPV?

HPV is responsible for almost all cervical cancers. The HPV vaccine is most effective if females receive it before their first sexual contact. For these females, the vaccine can prevent almost 100 per cent of the infections caused by the four strains of HPV contained in the vaccine.

In Ontario, there are approximately 630 women diagnosed with cervical cancer and 150 deaths each year.

How many doses of HPV vaccine does my daughter need?

HPV vaccine is currently given in Ontario as a series of three immunizations over a six month period. This vaccine will be routinely offered to all Grade 8 girls at school-based and community clinics at no cost.

Recommendations state that either a two dose or a three dose series of HPV vaccine may be given in younger girls; both are very safe and effective. The Province of Ontario is currently reviewing the provincial vaccine schedule and if there is a change from three doses to two doses, we will inform you.

Who should not get the HPV vaccine?

The HPV vaccine should **not** be given to anyone who:

- has a known allergy to any part of the HPV vaccine (aluminium, yeast, L-histidine, polysorbate 80, sodium borate)
- has had an allergic reaction to a previous dose of HPV vaccine
- is sick with a fever or infection worse than a cold on the day the needle is to be given
- is pregnant
- has already been fully vaccinated with HPV vaccine

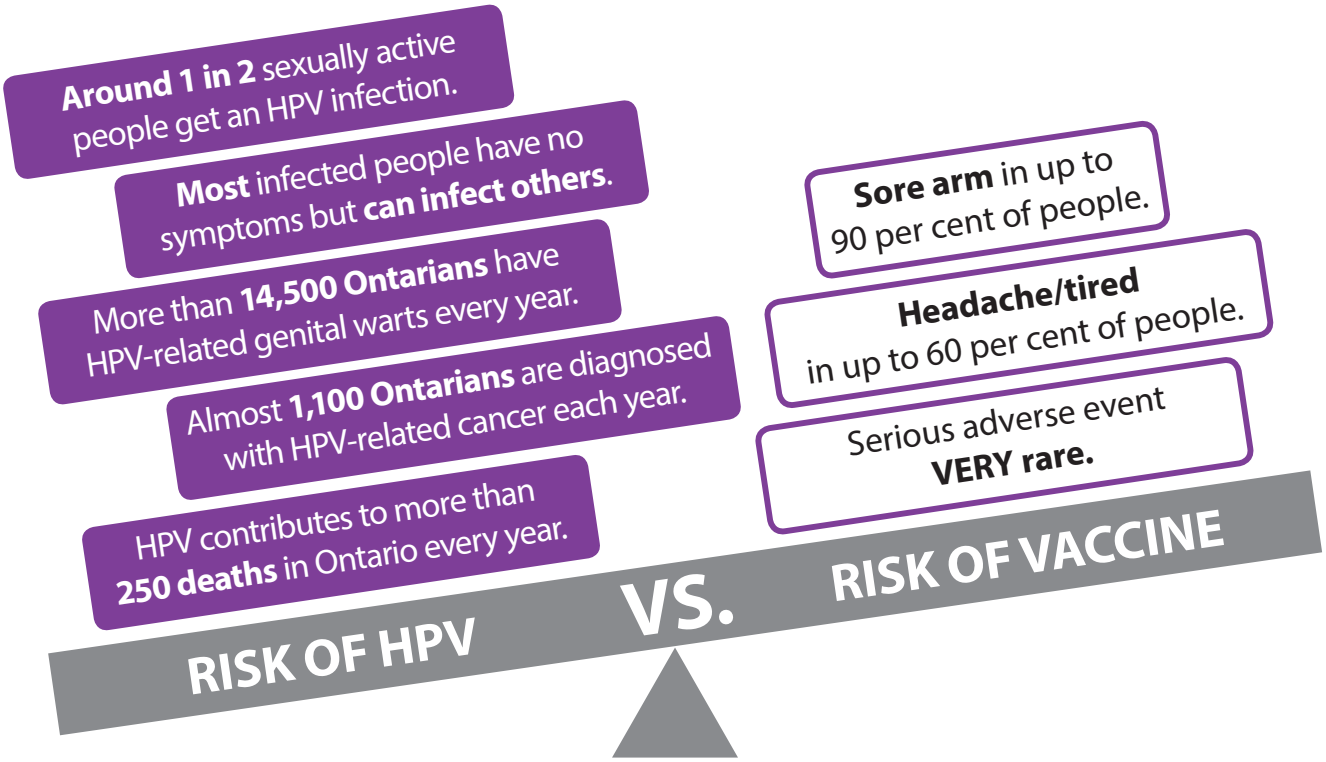
Is the HPV vaccine safe?

The HPV vaccine is safe. The most common side effects are soreness, redness and swelling where the needle was given. Mild fever, nausea, dizziness and headache may also occur. A high fever may occur but is not common. More severe side effects, including serious allergic reactions (e.g., trouble with breathing and hives) occur in up to 0.1% of people.

What if I decide not to vaccinate?

The HPV vaccine is not required by law. However, your child will be at risk of getting HPV if you decide not to vaccinate.

Risk of HPV vs. risk of vaccine



How can I prepare my child for vaccination?

- Talk to your child about the vaccine.
- Complete and return the consent form.
- Review helpful ways to deal with fear or anxiety (count to ten, look away from needle, focus on breathing).
- Make sure your child eats on clinic day.
- Make sure your child wears a short sleeve shirt on clinic day.

Visit our website for more information

halton.ca/immunize

Learn more about:

- HPV
- Vaccines
- Safety
- Side effects
- Ingredients
- Importance of vaccinations to protect your family

If you have questions, ask your family doctor or dial 311.