

INFORMATION ON HPV AND CANCER



For youth, parents and caregivers

HPV (Human Papillomavirus) can cause 6 types of cancer

- **HPV is a common virus that can affect people's wellness.**
- Most people don't know they have HPV because it usually has no symptoms. *With no symptoms, people can pass it on without knowing.*
- HPV can be passed through close skin-to-skin contact and sexual activity.
- Some types of HPV can cause warts on genitals.
- Some types of HPV can be more serious and cause cancer. *This happens when the virus changes our cells in a way that can lead to cancer over time.*

How to prevent HPV: Vaccines, health checks and wellness practices

- **The HPV vaccine works extremely well to prevent cancers caused by HPV.**
- It works best at a younger age, helping youth build strong protection.
- Regular health check-ups, including screening or self-swabs, along with wholistic health and wellness practices also help prevent HPV.

About the HPV vaccine

It works

- It's more than 95% effective at preventing HPV infections, genital warts and certain cancers.
- It's most effective when received at a young age, before any contact with the virus.

It's safe

- More than 200 million doses have been safely given around the world.
- It has been tested carefully and monitored closely for over 15 years.

It's free for youth in BC

This includes:

- Youth of all genders ages 9 to 18 years.
- Some young adults ages 19 to 26 years.
Check eligibility at healthlinkbc.ca/HPV

It's offered at:

- Schools (Grade 6 routine vaccines).
- Community health centres and clinics.
- Some pharmacies.



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For more information

FNHA.CA/HPV



Common questions about HPV

Is HPV really a concern for my child or community?

Yes, HPV is very common and can affect anyone. Around 3 in 4 people are likely to get HPV if they are not vaccinated. While in most cases, HPV infections come and go within a couple of years, it can sometimes lead to serious health issues like cancer.

What types of cancer does the HPV vaccine prevent?

The HPV vaccine helps protect against 6 types of cancer caused by HPV, including cancers of the throat and neck, cervix, penis, anus, vulva and vagina. It reduces the need for medical treatments for HPV-related cancers and genital warts.

Do parents or guardians give consent?

- **In BC, parents or guardians** give consent for school vaccines.
- **Youth older than 12** can consent on their own as mature minors if they understand the benefits and risks.

Are there side effects of the HPV vaccine?

Many people have no side effects from vaccines. For those that do, they are usually mild and go away on their own in a few days. Side effects include: soreness where the shot was given, fever, dizziness, nausea. Serious allergic reactions are extremely rare and can be treated.

Is the HPV vaccine only for girls?

The HPV vaccine is for all genders. It helps protect everyone from cancers and genital warts.

Is my child too young to receive the HPV vaccine?

The vaccine works best when received early. Younger people build stronger immunity and are best protected before any contact with the virus. If your child misses the vaccine, it is not too late to get vaccinated or chat with your care provider about your options.

Is the vaccine needed if my child is not sexually active? Does the HPV vaccine promote earlier sexual activity?

The HPV vaccine is still recommended because it helps protect youth before they are sexually active. Studies show that getting the HPV vaccine does not lead to earlier sexual activity.

What other wellness practices can I follow to prevent HPV?

- **Caring for your mind, body and spirit.** This may include seeking cultural or spiritual supports.
- **Share the knowledge on HPV,** cancer, and the vaccine with your community.
- **Use safer sex practices** (e.g., condoms or oral dams). Have open conversations with partners.
- **Try to get health check-ups and cancer screening.** For cervical cancer, Pap tests or at-home self-swabs are available for people with a cervix aged 25–69.
You can learn more at screeningbc.ca/cervix
- **Consider a dental check-up** to help catch mouth and throat cancer.
- **Talk to a community nurse or care provider.**



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