

## What are the side effects of the vaccine?

The HPV vaccine is safe. Most reactions are not serious and of short duration:

- Most people who receive the vaccine (over 50%) have no pain at the vaccination site.
- Some people (less than 50%) may experience redness or swelling at the vaccination site.
- Other people (less than 10%) may develop a rash at the vaccination site, fever, discomfort, or joint pain.

These symptoms can be relieved by applying a cold damp compress around the vaccination site and taking acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

Allergic reactions to the vaccine are very rare. If a severe allergic reaction occurs, it will start a few minutes after receiving the vaccine, and the nurse can treat it immediately. That's why it is recommended to stay there for at least 15 minutes after receiving the vaccine.

Other, rarer reactions have been reported, but have not been conclusively linked to the vaccine. No studies have established a link between the HPV vaccine and serious diseases such as multiple sclerosis or death.

## Who can receive the HPV vaccine free-of-charge?

The vaccine is free for:

- Girls in Grade 4
- Men and women age 26 or under
  - with a weakened immune system
  - who are infected with HIV
- Men age 26 or under who have sex with men
- Boys in Grade 4 (starting in September 2016)

### Why not vaccinate men over age 26?

There are no data on the efficacy of the vaccine against HPV in men in this age group.

### Are any other vaccines recommended for men who have sex with men?

Yes. The vaccine against Hepatitis B and A is provided free-of-charge for these men regardless of their age.

### For more information

Ask your CLSC or doctor for information on how to receive the vaccination free-of-charge.

[sante.gouv.qc.ca/vaccination](http://sante.gouv.qc.ca/vaccination)

Vaccination,  
the best protection

## HPV Vaccine



for men age 26 or under  
who have sex with men

Starting on January 1, 2016,  
men age 26 or under who have  
sex with men can be vaccinated  
free-of-charge against the human  
papillomavirus (HPV).

Vaccination experts in Québec have recommended adding men age 26 or under who have sex with men to the free HPV vaccination program.

This group has a higher risk of cancer caused by HPV, particularly anal cancer.

### Why should men age 26 or under who have sex with men be vaccinated against HPV?

Unlike heterosexual men, men who have sex with men are at greater risk of developing condylomas—also called anogenital warts—or cancer caused by HPV, especially anal cancer. Men who have sex with men don't normally benefit from the indirect protection provided by the vaccination of girls.

### What are HPVs?

HPVs are among the most common viruses in the world and are very numerous. There are over 100 different types, including HPV 6, 11, 16, and 18.

## What diseases can result from an HPV infection?

HPV 6 and 11 cause 85% of warts affecting the genital area (penis, scrotum, vulva, vagina, and cervix), anus, mouth and throat. Similarly, types 16 and 18 are the main cause of cancer of the anus, penis, vulva, vagina, cervix, mouth and throat.

The diseases caused by HPV 6, 11, 16, and 18 from 2004 to 2007 in Québec were as follows:

Diseases caused by HPV 6, 11, 16, and 18 (included in the vaccine)	Average Number of Cases Per Year in Québec from 2004 to 2007	
	Women	Men
Cancer of the anus, penis, vulva, vagina, and cervix	289 (vulva, vagina, cervix, and anus)	29 (penis and anus)
Cancer of the mouth and throat	58	172
Warts	14,000	14,000

Sex between men considerably increases the risk of anal cancer. Anogenital warts in men who have sex with men are two to three times more common than in heterosexual men of the same age.

## How are HPVs transmitted?

HPV 6, 11, 16, and 18 are transmitted during sex, even without penetration. Transmission occurs through contact between the skin or mucous membrane and the penis, scrotum, vagina, vulva, anus, or mouth of the infected person.

## Who can get an HPV infection?

Both men and women can get an HPV infection. It is the most common sexually transmitted disease. Between 70% and 80% of men and women will be infected with an HPV at least once in their lifetimes. Men and women can also be infected by more than one HPV at a time and more than once by the same HPV.

However, the risk of being infected by the same HPV may be higher for men because they develop fewer antibodies than women after being infected by one or more HPVs.

The risk of an HPV infection increases with the number of sexual partners.

## What are the symptoms of an HPV infection?

People with an HPV infection very often don't know they have it because they have no symptoms.

An infection by HPV 6 or 11 causes genital or anal warts. They do not cause cancer and will disappear by themselves over time.

An HPV 6 or 18 infection also generally disappears by itself, but can persist for a number of months or years, in which case, it can cause precancerous or cancerous lesions in the genital organs (penis, vulva, vagina, or cervix), anus, mouth and throat.

For the moment, there is no reliable, widely available test to detect such lesions in men.

## What is the best way to protect yourself against HPV?

The best form of protection against HPV is a combination of vaccination and the use of a condom.

Condoms are still the best way to protect against sexually transmitted diseases. However, as condoms do not cover the skin around the genital organs, they do not provide full protection against HPV.

## How does the vaccine protect against HPV?

The vaccine protects against HPV 6, 11, 16, and 18. The vaccine does not transmit HPV or HPV infections. It stimulates the immune system to produce antibodies against these four types of HPV.



## Is the vaccine effective for men who have sex with men?

In men who are not infected at the time of vaccination, the vaccination is 90% effective in preventing anogenital warts and 79% effective in preventing precancerous and cancerous lesions on the genital organs, anus, mouth and throat. However, the vaccine is less effective in men who are already infected at the time of vaccination. That's why it's better to be vaccinated before the onset of sexual activity or as soon as possible afterwards.

Recent data indicates that the vaccine may even be effective in preventing the reappearance of anal lesions in men already infected by one of the HPVs included in the vaccine.

## How many doses of the vaccine are required?

Depending on the person's age, two or three doses of the vaccine are required over a period of six months.