

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccines

Vaccination,
the best protection

April 2019

Vaccination is the best protection against infections caused by HPV and their complications. Three HPV vaccines are available for use in Canada: Cervarix, Gardasil and Gardasil-9. HPV types included in the vaccines are responsible for the majority of cancers of the cervix, the vagina, the vulva, the penis, the anus and the throat. Gardasil and Gardasil 9 also protect against infections from HPV types, which cause anal and genital warts (condylomas). Condylomas are the most frequent sexually transmissible infections in Canada. When someone is infected by an HPV, he or she often does not know because the infection goes undetected.

Disease	Signs and symptoms	Possible complications
HPV infections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Anal and genital warts (approximately 14,000 cases a year in Québec before vaccine arrival)Precancerous lesions of the uterine cervix, the vagina, the vulva, the penis, the anus or the throat if the infection persists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cervical cancer (approximately 280 cases a year in Québec)Cancers of the vagina, the vulva, the penis or the anus (approximately 115 cases a year in Québec)Cancers of the throat (approximately 185 cases a year in Québec)Death (cervical cancer causes approximately 70 deaths a year in Québec)

The vaccines

Vaccination is the best protection against HPV infections and their complications. More than one dose of the vaccines is required to obtain the best protection possible. This vaccine is usually given in Grade 4 of primary school. Ideally, vaccination should be performed before the start of sexual activity.

The vaccines are indicated even for someone who has already contracted an HPV infection. However, the HPV vaccine do not clear existing infections and show no therapeutic effect on already existing lesions at the time of vaccination.

Vaccinated women should continue to follow the recommendations for cervical cancer screening.

Symptoms after vaccination

Some symptoms may be caused by the vaccines (e.g. redness at the injection site). Other problems may occur by chance and are not related to the vaccines (e.g. cold, gastro, headache).

HPV vaccines are safe. Most reactions are harmless and do not last long.

Frequency	Known reactions to these vaccines	What to do
In most cases (more than 50% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pain at the injection site	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Apply a cold, damp compress at the injection site.Use medication for fever or discomfort if needed.See a doctor if symptoms are severe.
Very often (less than 50% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Redness and swelling at the injection site	
Often (less than 10% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Itching at the injection site, fever	

The Cervarix vaccine causes slightly more pain, swelling and redness at the injection site than the Gardasil 9 vaccine.

We recommend that you stay at the clinic for at least 15 minutes after vaccination because allergic reactions may occur. If an allergic reaction occurs, the symptoms will appear a few minutes after the vaccination. The person giving the vaccine will be able to treat this reaction immediately.

For any questions, contact the person giving the vaccine, or Info-Santé 8-1-1 or your doctor.