

# HPV vaccine (Gardasil®)



## FACTS

Beginning in the 2016-17 school year, both grade 7 boys and girls will be offered the HPV vaccine. If you have a daughter entering grade 8, she will also be offered the vaccine at a school-based clinic. This will be the last year when only girls in grade 8 will be offered the HPV vaccine. In future years it will be offered in grade 7 to both girls and boys. This change aligns with current scientific and expert recommendations to help protect more youth against HPV.

### What is HPV?

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a very common virus; there are over 100 strains worldwide. HPV infection can cause cervical, vaginal and vulvar cancers in women and penile cancer in men. HPV can also cause anal cancer, throat cancer and genital warts in both men and women.

### How is HPV spread?

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

More than 50 per cent of Canadians will 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 someone else.

### What are the symptoms of HPV?

Most people infected with HPV do not develop symptoms. Most will clear the infection on their own, however some will go on to develop genital warts or cancer. .

### Why should we vaccinate against HPV?

- Annually in Ontario, HPV is attributable to over 250 HPV-related deaths, almost 1100 new cases of cancer, and over 14,600 new cases of genital warts
- The HPV vaccine (Gardasil®) protects against 4 strains of HPV. These strains are the most common types of HPV responsible for the majority of genital wart cases and cancer cases including cervical, vaginal, vulvar and anal cancers.
- The HPV vaccine is most effective if received before any exposure to HPV

### How many doses of HPV vaccine does my son/daughter need?

For the majority of students, HPV vaccine is given as a series of two injections six months apart.

For those who receive their first dose on or after 14 years of age, or who have a weakened immune system, the vaccine is given in a series of three injections over a six month period.

### 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

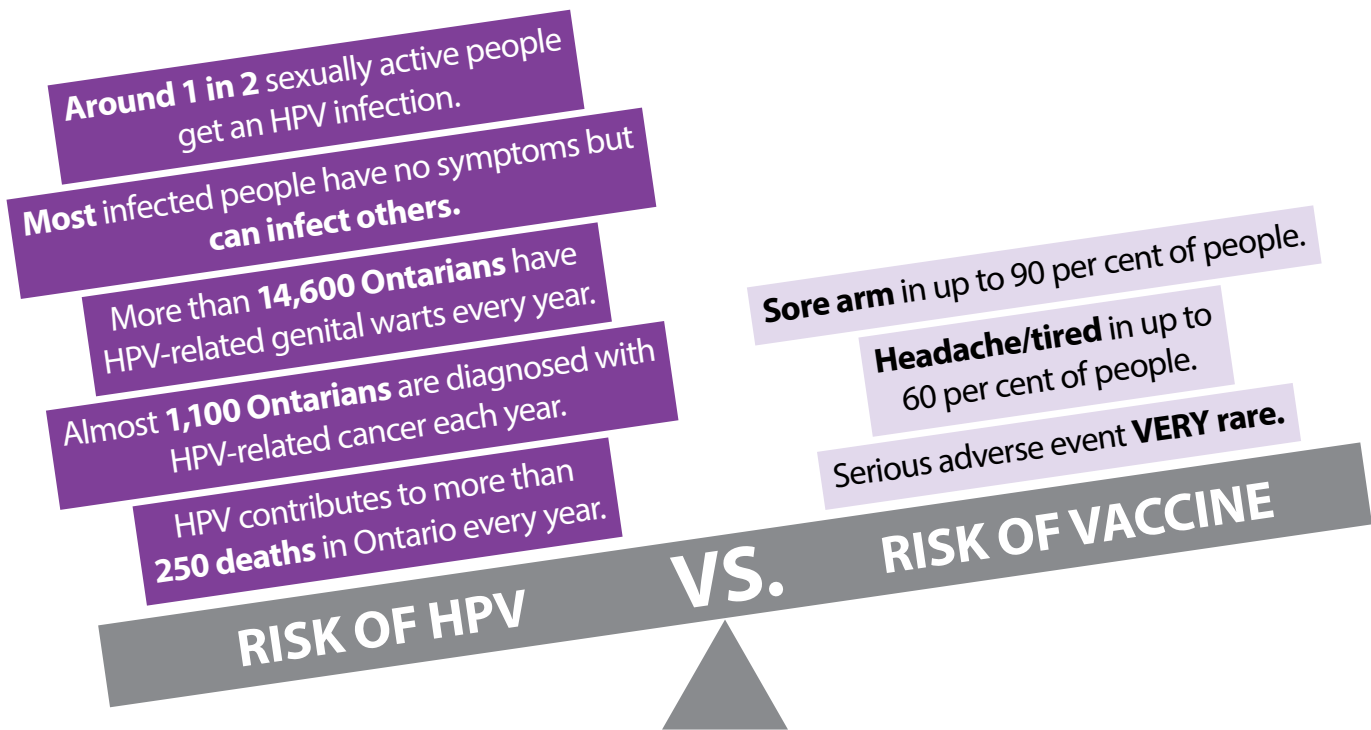
### Is the HPV vaccine safe?

The HPV vaccine is safe. The most common side effects are soreness, redness, swelling and itching in the arm 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](http://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.**

