

Nine-valent Human Papillomavirus (HPV9) Vaccine for Ontario's High-Risk HPV Immunization Program: Information for Patients

This fact sheet provides basic information only. It should not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to a health care professional about any health concerns you have, and before you make any changes to your diet, lifestyle or treatment.

Effective September 5, 2017, Ontario will offer the HPV9 vaccine as part of the high-risk HPV immunization program.

Who will be eligible for the HPV9 vaccine?

Eligible individuals include men who have sex with men (MSM) who are 26 years of age or younger who identify as gay, bisexual, as well as some individuals who identify as trans, and who have not started their HPV vaccine series before September 5, 2017.

What is HPV?

HPV, short for human papillomavirus, is very common around the world. HPV is spread during sexual activity involving intimate skin-to-skin contact with an infected person (who may have no signs or symptoms). There are many different types of HPV. Some types of HPV can cause genital warts. Other types can cause cancer, such as anal and penile cancer in men.

What is the HPV9 vaccine?

HPV9 (Gardasil®9) was authorized for use in Canada in February 2015. As of December 2016, it has been approved as a 2-dose series for individuals 9 to 14 years of age and a 3-dose series for

individuals who start their series on or after their 15th birthday as well as for individuals with certain immune-compromising conditions.

HPV9 will replace HPV4 vaccine which is the vaccine currently used in Ontario's publicly funded immunization program.

How does HPV9 vaccine differ from HPV4 vaccine?

Both HPV4 and HPV9 protect against HPV types 16 and 18 that cause approximately 70 percent of anogenital cancers. HPV4 and HPV9 can prevent approximately 90 percent of genital warts from HPV types 6 and 11.

Immunization with HPV9 can prevent up to an additional 14 percent of anogenital cancers caused by the additional five HPV types (31, 33, 45, 52 and 58).

Why should I get vaccinated against HPV?

It is estimated that without immunization, three out of four sexually active Canadians will get HPV in their lifetime.

Among MSM, the risk of persistent HPV infection and genital warts are about 3 times higher than heterosexual males; and the risk of anal cancer is 20 times higher in MSM compared to heterosexual males. Infections from most common types of HPV can be prevented with the HPV vaccine used in Ontario.

How can I get the free HPV vaccine?

The HPV vaccine is available through your local public health unit. To locate your public health unit, please visit: www.Ontario.ca/healthcareoptions.

What is the recommended schedule?

Depending on age at first dose and an individual's medical and immunization history, the HPV vaccine is given either as a 2 or 3-dose series. For all doses to be publicly funded, the series must be initiated and completed before turning 27 years of age. **You need all the recommended doses to get full protection.** Contact your local public health unit or health care provider to determine the recommended schedule for you.

Which HPV vaccine will I get if I started the vaccine series with HPV4 but have not yet completed the series?

Eligible individuals who started their HPV series with HPV4 vaccine will complete their series with HPV4.

This aligns with recommendations from national immunization experts, who recommend using the same type of HPV vaccine to finish the immunization series.

How does the HPV vaccine work?

The HPV vaccine provides protection against becoming infected with one of the HPV types in the vaccine. The HPV vaccine works best when people are vaccinated before they become sexually active, however the vaccine is still recommended for those who are sexually active, as they may not have been infected with HPV, and are unlikely to be infected with all of the types of HPV contained in the vaccine.

The HPV vaccine will not treat an existing HPV infection or associated anogenital warts, cancers or precancerous lesions.

Is the HPV9 vaccine safe?

The HPV vaccine is **very safe and effective**. It was carefully tested and evaluated before receiving approval by Health Canada. The HPV vaccine is approved for use in over 100 countries. More than 175 million doses have been distributed worldwide. Extensive, ongoing monitoring done in Canada and globally continues to show that the HPV vaccine is very safe.

Are there any side effects?

Prior to receiving any vaccine, you should always discuss the benefits and risks with your health care provider. Gardasil®9 has been shown to be generally well tolerated.

However, as with all vaccines, there may be some side effects. The most common side effects are mild and include arm pain, swelling or redness where the injection is given. Other side effects that have been reported include: dizziness, nausea, headaches, fever and fainting. The risk of a severe reaction from the HPV vaccine is extremely small.

Who should not get the HPV vaccine?

You should not get the HPV vaccine if you:

- Have had a life-threatening allergic reaction (also known as anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of the HPV vaccine; or
- Have a severe allergy to any component of the HPV vaccine or its container.

For other circumstances including previous side effects to a dose of HPV vaccine, illness or fever on the day the vaccine is to be given, talk to your local public health unit or health care provider.

When should I contact my health care provider?

If you have any unusual or severe symptoms after receiving the HPV vaccine, contact your local public health unit or health care provider immediately.

I'm older than 26. Can I still get the free HPV vaccine?

Individuals on or after their 27th birthday are not eligible for the free HPV vaccine. Please consult your health care provider for more information about potential benefits of HPV immunization over the

age of 26 years. Those not eligible for free HPV vaccine can purchase it from pharmacies across Ontario. Some private health insurance plans may also offer coverage for the cost of the vaccine.

What other vaccines am I eligible for?

Contact your local public health unit or health care provider to discuss other publicly funded vaccines you may be eligible for.

Where can I get more information?

For more information on HPV and the HPV vaccine contact your local public health unit:

www.Ontario.ca/healthcareoptions

More information on HPV, HPV vaccine and the high risk program can be found at: <http://sexualhealthontario.ca/>