

# Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine (Gardasil®9) Fact Sheet

## What is Human Papillomavirus (HPV)?

- HPV is a very common virus; some types of the virus cause no harm while others can cause genital warts or cancer.
- Genital HPV is usually spread by skin-to-skin contact such as sexual touching or sexual activity.

## What does the injectable HPV vaccine, Gardasil®9, protect against?

- Gardasil®9 helps protect against diseases from nine common types of HPV that cause
  - almost all cases of cervical cancer and most anal and vaginal cancers.
  - almost all cases of genital warts.
- It also helps protect against pre-cancerous and cancerous lesions of the penis, mouth and throat.

## Who should get the Gardasil®9 vaccine?

- Gardasil®9 is recommended for females and males over 9 years of age.
- If you are over 45 years of age, you may have Gardasil®9, since it *may* help to reduce the risk of HPV, though it is “off label” and not recommended by the drug manufacturer.
- HPV vaccine works best when given before becoming sexually active.
- Once sexually active, the vaccine still works for people who have not have been exposed to HPV or to the specific type(s) of HPV that the vaccine protects against.

## Who should not get the Gardasil®9 vaccine?

- Anyone who has had a serious allergic reaction to this vaccine in the past or who is allergic to any component of the vaccine
  - **Gardasil®9** - 9 types of HPV protein, aluminum (amorphous aluminum hydroxyphosphate sulfate adjuvant), sodium chloride, L-histidine, polysorbate, sodium borate; does **not** contain a preservative or antibiotics
- Anyone with a high fever or moderate to severe illness should wait until they feel well.

## What if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

- Gardasil®9 vaccine is not recommended if you are pregnant.
- If you become pregnant, wait until afterwards to complete your injections.
- You can have Gardasil®9 if you are breastfeeding.

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**IMM-114**

2015/10/13; Rev 2015/11/24

### What are the common side effects of this vaccine?

- You might have redness, itching, bruising, swelling and/or pain where the needle was given.
- You might also have fever, nausea, dizziness, headache and / or vomiting.
- It is recommended that you remain at the clinic for 15 minutes after the injection.
- Tylenol® or ibuprofen may be taken afterwards, as directed, to reduce discomfort.
- **Children under 19 years of age must not be given ASA, Aspirin® or salicylates.**

### How does someone know if they have an HPV infection?

- Many people who have HPV infection don't know it, but even people without symptoms can spread the infection.
- There is no general test to confirm if you have been infected with HPV, but if you have genital warts, you may notice fleshy bumps on the skin of your genitals and itching, discharge, bleeding or a burning sensation near the bumps.
- Treatments are available through health care providers.
- Early detection and treatment of abnormal changes found during a Pap test can help to prevent cervical cancer.

### What else do I need to know?

- HPV vaccine **cannot** give someone an HPV infection.
- Condoms do **not** provide reliable protection against HPV as the infection may be on skin that is not covered by the condom, but condoms can help protect against other STIs.
- Gardasil®9 does **not** treat active external genital lesions.
- You still need to have regular Pap tests (women) or recommended check-ups (men).

### When should I seek medical help after immunization?

- If you or your child experiences any unusual side effects, please seek medical attention and notify us.
- Go to Emergency at a hospital right away or call 911 if you or your child has any of the following problems after having this immunization:
  - swelling of the face and neck
  - problems breathing
  - hives and itchy, reddened skin

### Your Record of Protection

After you receive any immunization, make sure your health care provider updates your personal immunization record. Keep it in a safe place. Please inform us of any immunizations not received here.

### Other Questions?

Talk to your health care provider or call our Immunization Program at 613-966-5500 or 1-800-267-2803, ext. 221. | TTY Dial 711 (1-800-267-6511) | [hpePublicHealth.ca](http://hpePublicHealth.ca)

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