

Undergraduate Men: Time for the HPV Vaccine?

Canada's National Advisory Council on Immunization recommends that all boys and men aged 9-26 years get the HPV vaccine.¹

SIECCAN asked **651** undergraduate men in Canada if they had received the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine.



Only **38%** of the men said that they had received the HPV vaccine.

We asked the men who had not been vaccinated why they did not receive the vaccine. Below are the most common responses and related HPV facts for informed decision-making.

Undergraduate men's reasons for NOT getting the HPV vaccine

"I use condoms 100% of the time"

FACT:

Condoms **reduce** but don't eliminate the risk of HPV infection. The virus can be passed through skin-to-skin contact in the genital area, anus, and mouth (oral sex).

"The HPV vaccine is not necessary for me"

FACT:

In men, HPV causes 89% of anal cancers, 72% of oral cancers, 63% of penile cancers, and genital warts². Rates of anal and oral cancer among men have **increased** in recent years³.

"I'm not currently sexually active"

FACT:

Without HPV vaccination, **up to 75%** of sexually active men will have one or more HPV infections in their lifetime¹.

"I'm in a steady relationship"

FACT:

Most HPV infections are asymptomatic (i.e., no physical signs of infection). People in "steady" relationships may have active HPV infections acquired **BEFORE** entering their current relationship. HPV can be passed from one person to another even when the person with the infection has no symptoms.

The HPV Vaccine

There is a HPV vaccine that will protect you against the most common HPV strains that cause oral, anal, and penile cancer, and genital warts. **Getting the HPV vaccine also means that you will not pass HPV to current or future partners.**

If you would like to get the HPV vaccine:

1. Speak to a Health Care Provider.
2. Get a prescription from a physician or nurse practitioner. In some provinces, pharmacists can also provide a prescription.
3. Pick up your vaccine and get vaccinated. Ask your pharmacist if there will be a nurse present at the pharmacy who can administer the vaccine.
4. Submit your private insurance claim. Many private health insurance plans reimburse some or all of the cost of the vaccine.

1 Government of Canada. 2017. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/human-papillomavirus-hpv.html>

2 Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/hpv/statistics/cases.htm>

3 Smith, M. (2017). HPV related cancers: Tip of a very large iceberg. <https://ubcmj.med.ubc.ca/hpv-related-cancers-tip-of-a-very-large-iceberg/>