

The HPV Vaccine: **Men, It's about time!**

Protect yourself AND your partner(s) from HPV-related cancers and genital warts.

Many people are not aware that some cancers are caused by viruses. About 4 out of 10 cases of Human papillomavirus (HPV) related cancers occur among men.¹

In men, HPV causes 63% of penile cancers, 89% of anal cancers, and 73% of oropharyngeal cancers.² Oropharyngeal cancers (cancers of the back of the throat) are the most common HPV-cancers among men and are on the rise.^{3,4} HPV also causes genital warts.

HPV is more common than all other sexually transmitted infections combined⁵ and over 70% of men in Canada experience an HPV infection over their lifetime.⁶

You can get or pass HPV through close skin-to-skin contact during sex. HPV is easily passed from one person to another during penis-vagina, penis-anal, and oral-genital contact. A person with HPV can pass the infection to a sex partner even when they have no signs or symptoms.¹

An HPV infection usually clears within two years. In some people, it persists, leading to precancerous changes that may eventually lead to cancer. HPV symptoms can develop years after having sex with someone which makes it hard to know when your exposure took place.⁷

Good News:

HPV-Related Cancers are Preventable

The HPV Vaccine is safe and effective. **The HPV vaccine will protect you against the most common HPV strains that cause anal, throat, and penile cancers as well as genital warts.**

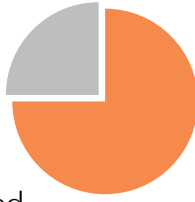
HPV vaccination can prevent over 90% of cancers caused by HPV.⁸

Getting the HPV vaccine also means that you will not pass HPV to any new sex partners. When you get the HPV vaccine, you will be preventing new HPV infections that you would have passed on to a sex partner. This applies to men who have sex with women and men who have sex with men.



Have You Been Vaccinated for HPV?

The Sex Information & Education Council of Canada (SIECCAN) asked 777 men aged 25-34 if they had received the HPV vaccine. **Over 75% of men in this age group indicated they had not received the vaccine.** Men who were not vaccinated were asked why they had not received the vaccine. Below are three of the most common responses plus related HPV facts you can use to make an informed choice about getting vaccinated for HPV.



“I’m in a steady relationship”

Most HPV infections show no symptoms and people in relationships may have already had an active HPV infection before entering that relationship. **At any age, starting a new steady relationship is a risk factor in getting a new HPV infection.** Since 70% of men and women experience at least one HPV infection in their lifetime, risk of exposure to HPV increases with each new sex partner.⁶

“The vaccine is not necessary for me”

Cervical cancer rates are increasing significantly among women.⁹ If you have sex with women, you can do your part to prevent the **spread of HPV by getting vaccinated against HPV** and contributing to the reduction in HPV-related cancer. HPV can cause anal, oral, and penile cancer as well as genital warts, and rates of oral cancer among men have increased in recent years.⁴

“I use condoms 100% of the time”

Because HPV is transmitted through skin-to-skin contact, condoms can reduce, but will not eliminate the risk of getting or transmitting HPV during sex. **The HPV vaccine is a safe and effective way to protect yourself from HPV, HPV-related cancer, and genital warts.**⁷

Steps to reduce your risk of HPV infection and HPV-related cancer

- **HPV Vaccine:** The HPV vaccine will protect you against the most common HPV types that cause cancer and genital warts.
- **HPV Screening:** In Canada there is currently no approved HPV DNA test for men. However, genital warts, the most common consequence of an HPV infection in men, can be diagnosed and treated by a healthcare provider. Since there currently are no screening recommendations for HPV-related cancers among men, it is important to have regular medical check-ups with your healthcare provider.¹⁰
- **Condoms and Dental Dams:** Since HPV is spread through skin-to-skin contact, correct and consistent condom and/or dental dam use may reduce but will not eliminate the risk of HPV.

To get the HPV vaccine:

1. Speak to a healthcare 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. In all provinces, primary care providers, physicians, nurse practitioners, and pharmacists can administer the vaccine. The territories differ in allowing pharmacists to administer the vaccine.¹¹
4. Submit your private insurance claim if applicable. Many private health insurance plans reimburse some or all the cost of the vaccine.

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2022a. <https://www.cdc.gov/hpv/parents/cancer.html#:~:text=About%204%20out%20of%20every,child's%20doctor%20about%20HPV%20vaccination>.

2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/hpv/statistics/cases.htm>

3 Habbous, S., Chu, K. P., Lau, H., Schorr, M., Belayneh, M., Ha, M. N., Murray, S., O'Sullivan, B., Huang, S. H., Snow, S., Parliament, M., Hao, D., Cheung, W. Y., Xu, W., Liu, G. 2017. Human papillomavirus in oropharyngeal cancer in Canada: analysis of 5 comprehensive cancer centres using multiple imputation. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. /cmaj.161379

4 Racovitan, V., Goodmna, E., Nicholas, A. C., Cheung, W. Y., Wurzba, S., Caulley, L. 2024. HPV-related oropharyngeal cancers in Canada: HPV oral scan. Poster presented at EUROGIN, Stockholm, Sweden; March 13-16, 2024.

5 Canadian Cancer Society. n.d. <https://cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/reduce-your-risk/get-vaccinated/human-papillomavirus-hpv#:~:text=Gardasil%209%20protects%20males%20and,is%20called%20a%20nonavalent%20vaccine>

6 Public Health Agency of Canada. 2024. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/infectious-diseases/sexual-health-sexually-transmitted-infections/human-papillomavirus-hpv.html>

7 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2024. https://www.cdc.gov/sti/about/about-genital-hpv-infection.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/stdfact-hpv.htm#

8 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2022c. <https://www.cdc.gov/hpv/parents/cancer.html>

9 Canadian Cancer Society. 2023. <https://cancer.ca/en/about-us/stories/2023/4-key-cancer-findings-in-2023>

10 Public Health Agency of Canada. 2012. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/infectious-diseases/sexual-health-sexually-transmitted-infections/hpv-men-questions-answers.html#a7>

11 Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. 2022. <https://www.partnershipagainstcancer.ca/topics/hpv-vaccine-access-2022/>