

Change to a two-dose HPV immunization program: Qs & As for public health units and providers

This questions and answers sheet provides basic information only. It is not intended to provide or take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

What change is being made to the HPV publicly funded immunization program?

Effective September 2015, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will be offering a 2-dose HPV immunization schedule for Ontario's publicly funded HPV immunization program. The change to the HPV immunization schedule means that all healthy females in Grade 8 who start the HPV vaccine series before the age of 14 years are eligible to receive 2-doses of the HPV vaccine to be considered fully immunized. All other individuals eligible for Ontario's HPV immunization program will continue to follow the 3-dose schedule.

Why has the program changed to a 2-dose HPV vaccine series?

The program change is consistent with current scientific evidence and expert recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) and the Provincial Infectious Disease Advisory Committee on Immunization (PIDAC-I) showing that the HPV vaccine, Gardasil[®], is equally effective for specified groups using a 2-dose versus a 3-dose vaccine schedule.

What are some of the expected benefits of moving to a 2-dose HPV vaccine program?

There is an excellent safety profile associated with the HPV vaccine, Gardasil[®]. Reducing the schedule by one dose of vaccine could further minimize potential adverse events following immunization (AEFIs) and may lead to improved HPV immunization coverage.

Who is eligible for a 2-dose HPV vaccine series?

All healthy Grade 8 females who receive their first dose of HPV vaccine before the age of 14 years are eligible to receive the vaccine series according to a 2-dose HPV vaccine schedule. The 2-dose vaccine series can be administered using a 0, 6 months or a 0, 12 months schedule, with the 0,6 month schedule likely being preferable from a logistical perspective for the school-based immunization program. It should be noted that if the second dose of the HPV vaccine is administered earlier than 6 months after the first dose, then a third dose should be given.

Who is NOT eligible for a 2-dose HPV vaccine series?

All other females eligible for Ontario's HPV immunization program should continue to follow the 3-dose schedule given at 0, 2 and 6 months, as there is insufficient evidence to recommend the 2-dose schedule in these population groups. This includes females in Grades 8 to 12 who are:

- Healthy and received the first dose of HPV vaccine on or after their 14th birthday; or
- Immunocompromised or immunocompetent HIV-infected, regardless of age.

Who can I contact for more information?

- If you have further questions, please contact your local public health unit. To find your local public health unit, visit: www.phdapps.health.gov.on.ca/PHULocator.
- Public information regarding Ontario's HPV immunization program is available at www.health.gov.on.ca/en/ms/hpv/
- Further information about Ontario's publicly funded immunization programs or provincial immunization schedule is available on the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's website for health care professionals at: www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/immunization