



School Immunization Program

Human Papillomavirus Vaccine - Gardasil®

Vaccines are the best way to protect against some very serious infections.

The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, Gardasil®, protects against infections caused by four common types of the HPV; 6, 11, 16, and 18.

What is HPV?

HPV is a common virus with more than 100 different types. Some types of HPV (including 16 and 18) can cause precancerous lesions, cervical cancer, and other types of cancers. Other types of HPV (including 6 and 11) can cause genital warts. In Canada, HPV types 16 and 18 cause 70% of cervical cancer and types 6 and 11 cause about 90% of genital warts. Both females and males can be infected with HPV.

HPV infections are spread by skin-to-skin contact, usually during sexual activity with an infected person. Most people who have an HPV infection do not have any signs or symptoms, but they can still carry the virus and may spread the infection to others without knowing.

There are 500 women diagnosed with cervical cancer and 140 women die each year in Ontario from cervical cancer.

Who should get the vaccine?

All grade 8 girls in Ontario are offered a three-dose series of HPV vaccine in school that is publicly funded (free). The vaccine is most effective when given before sexual activity begins.

The HPV vaccine is also publicly funded now for any girl who was once eligible for the grade 8 program in Ontario (those born in 1994 and after). Girls in this group can now access the vaccine through their health care provider or by calling the health unit to book an appointment for a public clinic.

HPV vaccine is recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization for both males and females 9-26 years of age, and may also be given to females 27-45 years of age.

People who do not qualify for publicly funded (free) vaccine can see their health care provider or call the health unit and pay to get the vaccine. The total cost of the three needles is between \$400 and \$500. Some health insurance plans may cover the cost of the vaccine. To determine if this vaccine is covered by their health plan, people should contact their health insurance provider and provide them with the product DIN: 02283190.

How well does the vaccine work?

The vaccine provides nearly 100% protection against the four HPV types included (6, 11, 16 & 18) in those vaccinated. The series (three doses) must be complete to ensure your best protection. Studies are ongoing to determine if a booster dose will be needed later on in life.

Is there an alternative to the vaccine?

One way a person can protect themselves is through long-term abstinence from sex. Condoms do not provide reliable protection against HPV. Once sexually active, regular Pap tests are still required to check for changes in the cervix.

What are the common side effects of this vaccine?
The most common side effects are mild and include

discomfort, redness, itching, bruising and/or swelling at the spot where the vaccine was given. Some people may also have fever, nausea, dizziness, headache, vomiting or have pain in the arm they received their vaccine in.

Is the vaccine safe?

Any potential risk of a serious reaction or side effect from a vaccine is much less than the risk of the disease that the vaccine protects against. It is also important to note that just because something occurs after receiving a vaccine does not necessarily mean that it was caused by the vaccine. There may be other causes that need to be investigated.

If you experience any side effect worse than what is described in the “What are the common side effects of this vaccine?” section above, please seek medical attention and notify the health unit.

Who should not get this vaccine?

- Anyone who is allergic to any of the vaccine components for *Gardasil®* which include:

HPV protein	The virus protein used to make the vaccine. It is not a live virus, so it can not cause HPV.
Yeast	Used as a nutrient to help grow the vaccine. Found in bread and other baked goods.
L-histidine	An amino acid used to stabilize the vaccine. Found in protein rich foods like meats, dairy.
Aluminum	Used to help the body create a better immune response to the vaccine. Occurs naturally in our environment, food and water.
Polysorbate-80	Used as an emulsifier (prevents the vaccine components from clumping together). Found in foods such as ice cream.
Sodium Chloride	Used as a buffer in the vaccine. Occurs naturally in our bodies. Also found in table salt.
Sodium Borate	Used as a buffer in the vaccine. Found in some cosmetic products, some vitamin supplements, soil and water.

- Anyone with a high fever or serious infection worse than a cold. They should delay having the vaccine until they are better.
- Anyone who may be pregnant.

What else do I need to know?

- More information can be found on our website at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org
- This vaccine is provided to grade 8 girls through the school immunization program only. It is only available from your health care provider on a case by case basis. The health unit has to release the vaccine, as publicly funded HPV vaccine is not routinely stocked in health care provider offices.