

Population and Public Health Division

# Nine-valent Human Papillomavirus (HPV9) Vaccine in Ontario's HPV Immunization Program: Information for Parents

This fact sheet provides basic information only. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to a health care professional about any health concerns you have, and before you make any changes to your diet, lifestyle or treatment.

**As of September 5, 2017, Ontario will offer the HPV9 vaccine to all grade 7 students, as part of the publicly funded immunization program.**

## What is HPV?

HPV, short for human papillomavirus, is a very common virus worldwide. There are many different types of HPV. Some types of HPV can cause cancer of the cervix in women, penile cancer in men, and a number of other cancers in both men and women. Other types of HPV can cause skin lesions such as genital warts.

It is estimated that without immunization, three out of four sexually active Canadians will get HPV in their lifetime. Fortunately, infections from the most common types of HPV can be prevented with the HPV vaccine.

## What is the HPV9 vaccine?

HPV9 (Gardasil®9) was authorized for use in Canada in February 2015. As of December 2016, it has been approved as a 2-dose series for

individuals 9 to 14 years of age and a 3-dose series for individuals who start their series on or after their 15<sup>th</sup> birthday or who are immunocompromised, similar to the HPV4 vaccine.

## How does HPV9 vaccine differ from HPV4 vaccine?

HPV9 protects against the same HPV types contained in HPV4, types 6, 11, 16 and 18, plus an additional five HPV types, 31, 33, 45, 52 and 58. Both HPV4 and HPV9 protect against HPV types 16 and 18 that cause approximately 70 percent of cervical and anogenital cancers and 60 percent of high-risk precancerous cervical lesions. HPV4 and HPV9 can prevent approximately 90 percent of genital warts from types 6 and 11.

Immunization with HPV9 can prevent up to an additional 17 percent of cervical cancers, 30 percent of high-risk precancerous cervical lesions and up to 14 percent of anogenital cancers caused by the additional five HPV types (31, 33, 45, 52 and 58).

### **How can my child get the free HPV vaccine?**

Starting in September 2017, the free HPV9 vaccine will be offered to grade 7 students as part of Ontario's school-based immunization program, administered by local public health units.

### **What is the immunization schedule for the HPV9 vaccine in the grade 7 immunization program?**

The HPV9 vaccine is administered in 2 doses given at least six months apart, similar to the HPV4 vaccine.

### **Will my child who started their HPV series with HPV4 but did not complete their series be eligible for the free HPV9 vaccine?**

If an eligible student received the HPV4 vaccine before the 2017/18 school year but has not yet completed their HPV series, the student will be offered the HPV4 vaccine to complete the series.

National immunization experts recommend that whenever possible,

the same HPV vaccine should be used to complete a vaccine series.

### **What vaccine will be given to eligible students who did not start their vaccine series prior to the 2017/18 school year?**

Students who were eligible for HPV vaccine prior to September 5, 2017 and have not started their vaccine series will continue to be eligible for HPV4 vaccine.

### **How does the HPV vaccine work?**

The HPV vaccine provides protection against infection with the HPV that are contained in the vaccine. The HPV vaccine works best when people are vaccinated before they become sexually active, however the vaccine is still recommended for those who are already sexually active. This is because they may not have been infected with HPV during previous sexual activity, and are unlikely to be infected with all of the types of HPV contained in the vaccine.

### **Is the HPV9 vaccine safe?**

The HPV vaccine is **very safe and effective**. It was carefully tested and evaluated before receiving approval by Health Canada. The HPV vaccine is approved for use in over 100 countries. More than 175 million doses have been distributed worldwide. Extensive, ongoing monitoring done in Canada and globally continues to show that the HPV vaccine is very safe.

### **Are there any side effects?**

Prior to receiving any vaccine, you should always discuss the benefits and risks with your health care provider. Gardasil®9 has been shown to be generally well tolerated.

However, as with all vaccines, there may be some side effects. The most common side effects are mild and include arm pain, swelling or redness where the injection is given. Other side effects that have been reported include: dizziness, nausea, headaches, fever and fainting.

The risk of a severe reaction from the HPV vaccine is extremely small.

### **Who should not get the HPV vaccine?**

- Individuals who have had a life-threatening allergic reaction (also known as anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of the HPV vaccine; or
- Those with a severe allergy to any component of the HPV vaccine or its container.

For other circumstances including previous side effects to a dose of

HPV vaccine, illness or fever on the day the vaccine is to be given, talk to your local public health unit or health care provider.

### **When should I contact my health care provider?**

If your child has any unusual or severe symptoms after receiving the HPV vaccine, contact your local public health unit or health care provider immediately.

### **Where can I get more information?**

Contact your local public health unit or talk to your doctor or nurse practitioner. To locate your local public health unit, visit:

[www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions](http://www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions).

More information on HPV, the HPV vaccine and the school-based programs can be found at [www.ontario.ca/hpv](http://www.ontario.ca/hpv).

Information about the HPV high risk program can be found at [www.sexualhealthontario.ca](http://www.sexualhealthontario.ca).