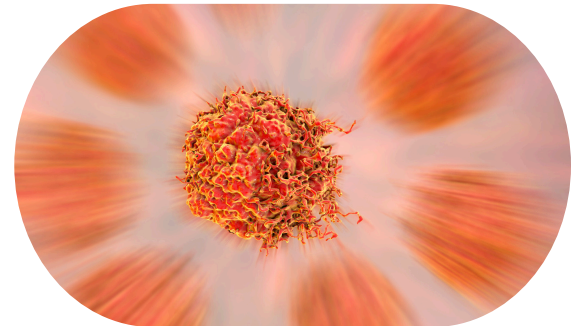


## What is HPV?

The human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted diseases in the world, and it is estimated that **75% of sexually active Canadians** who have not been immunized will have an HPV infection at some point in their life. HPV is primarily spread through any current or past, wanted or unwanted **skin-to-skin** contact between people's genitals and mouth. However, in rare cases, it can be passed from **birthing parent to baby during childbirth**, if the birthing parent has a genital HPV infection.

## What are the symptoms of HPV?

Often, HPV does not cause any symptoms and most of the time the infection will clear on its own. This makes it difficult to know when or how the virus was spread. Sometimes, an HPV infection can lead to visible genital warts. However, the invisible health risks of an HPV infection are severe. HPV infections are the cause of **almost all cases of cervical cancer**, as well as other cancers in both women and men, such as **penile, anal, and oropharyngeal cancer**.



## Who is at highest risk for HPV?

Peak risk for HPV infection happens within 5 to 10 years of the onset of sexual activity. Most sexually active men and women will have an HPV infection at some point in their life. Getting vaccinated and practicing safe sex can help protect against HPV.



**People who are sexually active**



**People who have not been vaccinated**

## What are the current HPV vaccine guidelines?

Vaccines are available that can protect against the most common types of HPV that cause cancer. The Canadian Cancer Society recommends that Canadians get vaccinated to reduce their risk of HPV-related cancers. The HPV vaccine is administered as part of the routine childhood vaccine schedule. Getting your child vaccinated against HPV before they become sexually active ensures that if they do decide to have sex later on in life, they are protected against HPV, maximizing the benefit of immunization.



**Vaccination remains one of the best ways to safeguard yourself from preventable diseases, reduce the risk of serious illness and complications and prevent the spread of disease to others. Talk to your healthcare provider to learn more about how vaccination can support you and your families health and wellness.**