IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine

What is human papillomavirus (HPV)?

- HPV is a very common virus that is spread from person to person by close physical contact like skin-to-skin contact or sexual activity. This includes vaginal, anal and oral sex between people of any gender.
- There are over 100 types of HPV that can infect different parts of the body.
- It is estimated that as many as 75% (3 out of 4) people will get HPV at some point in their lives.
- Many people who have HPV don't even know it, as it often has no symptoms. HPV is still contagious, even without visible symptoms.
- Visible symptoms of HPV include skin growths (warts) on places such as your hands, feet, genitals or anus.
- In more serious cases, certain types of HPV are linked to cancers, including those of the head, neck, throat, cervix, vulva, anus and penis.
- People may think that cancer only affects older people or that you don't have to worry about preventing cancer when you are young, but this is not true. HPV–related cancers can happen as early as your twenties, and the risk increases as you get older.
- It is preventable through immunization.

What is the HPV vaccine?

- The HPV vaccine offers protection against the most harmful types of HPV that can cause genital warts and cancer.
- The most effective way to prevent HPV is to receive the vaccine before becoming sexually active.
- Like with any other vaccine, HPV vaccine works best when it is given before you are exposed to the virus.

Who should get the HPV vaccine?

- In Nova Scotia, the HPV vaccine is routinely offered to Grade 7 students as part of the School Immunization Program. If the vaccine was missed or refused in the Grade 7 School Immunization Program, people can still get the vaccine for free as part of this program until 21 years of age.
- People under 46 years of age who are considered to be at higher risk of getting HPV can also get the HPV vaccine for free. This includes:
  - » Men who have sex with men
  - » Two-spirited people
  - » Transgender people
  - » People living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
- To ensure the best possible protection against HPV, people should receive all vaccine doses they're eligible for.

Who should NOT get the HPV vaccine?

- People who have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose or any component of the HPV vaccine.
- People who are sick or have a fever (temperature of 38.5°C/101.3°F or greater).

Please read other side.

www.nshealth.ca/immunizations

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IMMUNIZATION AFTERCARE

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine

People should stay in the clinic for at least 15 minutes after receiving any type of immunization to monitor possible reaction. As with any vaccine there is a slight possibility that a more serious reaction could occur.

What are the possible side effects of the HPV vaccine?

As with all vaccines, the most common symptoms experienced following the HPV vaccine are soreness, redness and swelling at the injection site, headache, fever and nausea.

As fever may occur, make sure you have acetaminophen or ibuprofen at home. Follow the instructions that come with the product. Talk to your healthcare provider before using either of these medications as they are not recommended for people with certain medical conditions.

Call your healthcare provider if:

- A fever lasts longer than 24 hours.
- A fever is 38.5°C (101.3°F) or higher.
- A fever doesn't come down after acetaminophen or ibuprofen are taken.
- Other illness or symptoms occur.

Questions?

If you have any questions about HPV or the HPV vaccine, please call your local Public Health office (see list of offices here: www.nshealth.ca/public-health) or your healthcare provider.

For more information on immunization, please visit the following websites:

Nova Scotia Health Public Health
www.nshealth.ca/immunizations

Immunize Canada
immunize.ca

Public Health Agency of Canada
www.canada.ca/public-health

Canadian Paediatric Society
cps.ca

811
811.novascotia.ca

www.nshealth.ca/immunizations

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