

FACTSHEET: HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS (HPV) - MALES

HPV DISEASE AND VACCINES

Males can carry HPV and transmit the virus to sexual partners.^{1,2} HPV can also cause a considerable disease burden among males.^{1,3}

Evidence suggests that HPV vaccination should be given to all boys as well as girls, and early vaccination assures the greatest protection against HPV infection.⁴

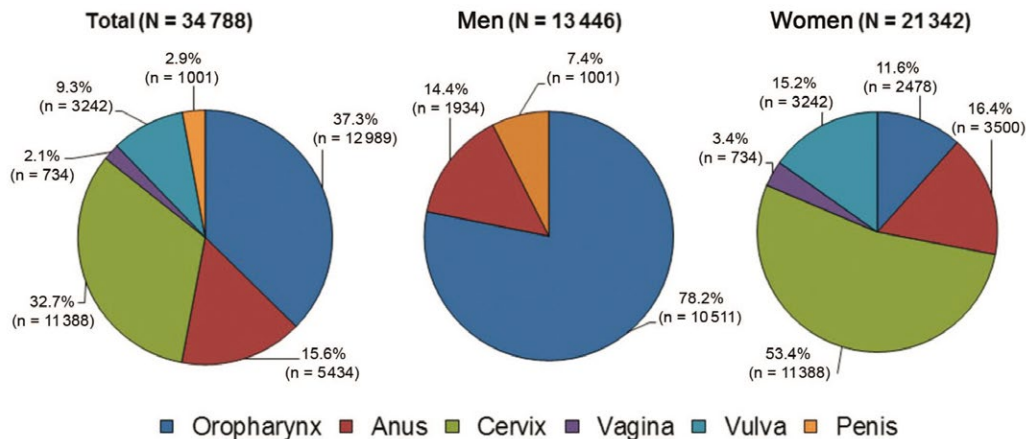
The HPV vaccine is funded for grade 6 girls, females born after 1994 in BC and for HIV positive females aged 9 – 26 years. The HPV vaccine is funded for boys and men aged 9 – 26 years who are at higher risk of contracting HPV (males who have sex with males, males who are HIV positive, youth in custody or street-involved). Unfortunately, HPV vaccine is not publicly funded in BC for all males up to the age of 26 years.⁵

Disease

HPV is not simply a women’s issue; males are at risk of acquiring and suffering from HPV-related diseases such as genital warts, and cancers of the anus, penis, tonsils, larynx, and tongue.³

Whereas organized screening programs play a significant role in reducing the incidence and mortality rates of cervical cancer in women,⁶ there is scant evidence of standardized screening programs for HPV for men.

Figure 1: Number of new human papillomavirus (HPV)-associated cancers overall, and by sex, in the United States, 2009.⁷



Incidence

Anogenital HPV infection is very common with 75% of the population estimated to be infected with the virus at some point in their lives. While women have a clear peak risk of acquisition in their early 20’s, men appear to be at risk of acquiring HPV infection throughout their lifespan.⁸

Similar to findings in women, many HPV infections in males will clear. However, since the median time to clearance is likely to be ≥ 6 months for both genders, transmission of HPV in a sexually active population is highly likely, underscoring the importance of vaccination.^{3,9}

Incidence statistics:

- Studies have found that genital HPV infection is very common in men with prevalence estimated to be >65% in asymptomatic males aged 18-70 years. The most common HPV type detected was Type 16 (6.5%).²
- The antibody response to natural HPV infection appears to be weaker in men compared to women,² a factor which may contribute to the higher prevalence of infections in men.¹⁰



- The most important risk factor for males to acquire HPV infection is number of sexual partners.¹¹
- Infection with HPV may increase the risk of acquiring HIV¹², and vice-versa.
- The incidence of anal cancer among HIV+ men is 70/100,000 person-years – greater than cervical cancer rates in global regions with the highest rates of cervical cancer.¹³
- In the developed world, the number of HPV-related cancers in men is similar to that of cervical cancer in women.¹
- In Canada, incidence and prevalence of genital warts in males has increased substantially in recent years, while rates in women have remained stable since 2002. Incidence of genital warts in males is consistently higher than in females.^{14,15,16}
- In the US the rate of oropharyngeal HPV related cancers in men is on the rise with its rate approaching that of cervical cancer.¹⁷

Vaccines

Three vaccines (bivalent/HPV2, quadrivalent/HPV4 and nonavalent/HPV9) are available to protect against cervical and other cancers in women. HPV4 and HPV9 also protect against genital warts. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) states HPV4 and HPV9 vaccines are indicated for all males 9-26 years of age to protect against pre-cancerous lesions, cancers, and genital warts.¹⁸

The HPV9 vaccine, Gardasil®9, is now available and recommended for use in all boys and men 9 to 26 years and all girls and women 9 to 45 years.¹⁸

Non-publicly funded (NPF) vaccines such as the HPV vaccine approved for males in BC (Gardasil®) may be available in three locations: pharmacies, travel clinics or offices of physicians. Please refer parents to the BC Pediatric Society resource [NPF Vaccines: Access](#) for the steps to follow to obtain Gardasil® or Gardasil®9 from their pharmacist for you to administer in your office.

“The ‘HPV vaccine is cancer prevention’ message resonates strongly with parents. In addition, studies show that a strong recommendation from you is the single best predictor of vaccination.”¹⁹



TAKE AWAY MESSAGE FOR PARENTS

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| » | Males can carry the HPV virus and develop HPV-related cancers and other diseases. |
| » | Males can transmit the virus to sexual partners. |
| » | Early vaccination assures the greatest protection against HPV infection. |
| » | HPV vaccine has been shown to be safe and effective in males. |
| » | The HPV4 and HVP9 vaccines are recommended for males aged 9 to 26 NACI. |

Please note that the information in this document is provided for educational purposes only, is not intended to provide medical advice and should in no way replace clinical judgment of the healthcare professional.



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One of the most important questions on a parent's mind about vaccines is:

"What is your recommendation as a health care provider?"

**Visit the BC Pediatric Society website for Immunization Information
for Physicians and for Families at www.bcpeds.ca**

