



ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF REGINA  
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

445 Broad Street N., Regina, SK, CANADA S4R 2X8  
Tel: (306) 352-1651 Fax: (306) 352-6313 E-mail: [chancery@archregina.sk.ca](mailto:chancery@archregina.sk.ca)



**Letter from the Bishops of Saskatchewan  
To Catholic School Boards and Catholic Parents  
Concerning the Proposed Publicly Funded HPV Vaccination Program**

October 5, 2017

Dear Catholic school boards and Catholic parents in Saskatchewan,

We, the bishops of Saskatchewan, sincerely regret the confusion we caused in our letter of Sept. 25, 2017, on the government funded school-based offering of the human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine. Over the past days we have welcomed and appreciated conversations with health professionals, representatives of health organizations, and concerned parents, and would now offer the following as a means of clarification:


1. In making decisions regarding vaccinations, we again invite the faithful to two underlying considerations:  
a) that parents (in the case of minors) and individual adults are responsible to make informed decisions according to their own conscience, formed by scientific findings and by their faith;  
b) that decisions regarding vaccinations are not only personal, but also a matter of public health and the common good.


2. In conversations with health professionals, we have been introduced to numerous studies which document the effectiveness of the HPV vaccine against cervical cancer, but also against other forms of cancer, including throat cancer, which has been on the rise in recent years. We understand that the vaccine is generally considered to be safe, and is widely regarded today as an effective cancer prevention strategy for boys and girls alike. Links to these studies are provided below.


3. The HPV vaccine is not a cure-all against everything. As church leaders, we stress that chastity is and will always be a virtue worth proposing and modelling to our young people. It is a way of life that brings value and joy. At the same time, we live in a world where non-consensual or regrettable sexual encounters occur. We were encouraged by research suggesting that the HPV vaccines are not increasing risky sexual behavior (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26864126>)


As ever, we are grateful for the unconditional love that is modeled by parents for their children, and with you, strive to support the best decisions for our young people's faith, health and education.


Yours in Christ,

  
Most Rev. Donald Bolen  
Archbishop of Regina

  
Most Rev. Albert Thevenot  
Bishop of Prince Albert

  
Most Rev. Murray Chatlain  
Archbishop of Keewatin-Le Pas

  
Very Rev. Fr. Kevin McGee  
Saskatoon Diocesan Administrator

  
Most Rev. Bryan Bayda  
Ukrainian Eparchial Bishop of Saskatoon



August 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians,

*This webpage contains information prepared by the Ministry of Health on the immunization program administered by Public Health in our schools, including information on the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). More information can be attained by contacting Public Health regarding HPV. The Bishops of Saskatchewan have provided the letter in 2027 to assist parents/guardians in making an informed decision.*

*The Prince Albert Catholic Board of Education has approved the administration of the HPV immunization program in our schools. This decision included recognizing and affirming that parents/guardians have the final say. Please note that with any immunization program, your consent is required, and the enclosed "Consent for Immunization" offers three choices. At the request of the Ministry of Health, please Sign and return the Immunization Consent Form provided by Public Health to confirm you would like your child to receive a vaccine. Similarly, send the forms back to decline even if you do not.*

*If you have any questions about this letter or the immunization program, please do not hesitate to call. Thank you.*

Sincerely,

L. Trumier  
Director of Education

# Human Papillomavirus Vaccine

**Vaccines have saved more lives compared to any other medical intervention. Vaccines help the immune system recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause serious diseases.**

## **Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) and causes many cancers.**

- There are over 100 types of HPV viruses and 9 types are vaccine preventable.
- HPV types 6 and 11 cause over 90% of genital warts.
- HPV types 16, 18, 31, 33, 45, 52 and 58 cause mouth, nose, throat and anal cancers in males and females, cervical and vaginal cancers in females and penile cancer in males.
- The HPV vaccine does not protect against other STIs.

## **How is HPV spread?**

- HPV is transmitted through sexual skin-to-skin contact.
- Anyone who is sexually active can get a HPV infection.
- About 75% of sexually active females and males will have at least one HPV infection during their lifetime.

## **What are the symptoms of HPV infection?**

- Most people do not show any signs or symptoms and can pass HPV on to others without knowing it.
- Genital warts can look like small, flesh-colored bumps or have a cauliflower-like appearance. Genital warts do not have to be visible to spread the infection to a sexual partner.
- Usually, a HPV infection will go away on its own but for some people, the body cannot fight the HPV infection and the infected cells can develop cancer.

## **How can HPV infections be prevented?**

- Be immunized. **Gardasil® 9** vaccine is very effective to prevent infection against 9 common types of HPV.
- Abstinence from all sexual activity and avoiding sexual skin-to-skin contact are the only ways to avoid getting or spreading a HPV infection.
- Limit the number of sexual partners you have and always use condoms.

## **Who can get this vaccine for free?**

- Grade 6 students as part of the routine immunization program.
- Females born since January 1, 1996 and males born since January 1, 2006, who missed the HPV vaccine in Grade 6 can receive it for free before they are 27 years old by contacting Public Health.
- Those with specific medical conditions (check with Public Health).
- NOTE: HPV vaccines are recommended for other people but are not available for free. Individuals should talk with their healthcare provider about privately purchasing HPV vaccine. **The Ministry of Health does not reimburse any costs associated with privately purchased vaccines.**

## **Who should not get this vaccine?**

- Persons who have a serious acute illness, with or without a fever, should delay immunizations.
- People who had a serious or life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of any HPV vaccine, or any components of the vaccine.
- Pregnant women. Women who become or plan to become pregnant during the vaccination series should temporarily stop or postpone the series until after giving birth.



### What are common reactions to this vaccine?

**Vaccines are very safe and effective. It is much safer to get this vaccine than to get a HPV-related cancer or genital warts.**

- Temporary pain, redness and swelling at the injection site.
- Headache, fever, nausea, dizziness, tiredness or rash.
- These reactions are mild and may last 1 to 2 days.
- Only treat a fever (at least 6 to 8 hours after immunization) if you are uncomfortable and not sleeping.

Use **Acetaminophen** (Tylenol®, Tempra®) or **Ibuprofen** (Advil®, Motrin®) to treat fevers and pain in children and adults. **Never give ASA** (Aspirin®) to anyone younger than 18 years old because of the serious risk of Reye's syndrome.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. This reaction can be treated, and occurs in less than one in one million people who get the vaccine. **If this happens after you leave the clinic, get medical attention or call 911 right away.**

### Who should you report reactions to?

- Report any adverse or unexpected reactions to your local public health nurse, your doctor, nurse practitioner or 811 as soon as possible.

### Talk to a public health nurse:

- If you have questions or concerns about your or your child's reaction to an immunization.
- If you or your child had to go to a doctor, a hospital or to a health centre with a symptom that might be related to immunization.

### What does the vaccine contain?

**GARDASIL® 9** contains HPV types 6, 11, 16, 18, 31, 33, 45, 52 and 58, aluminum (as Amorphous Aluminum Hydroxyphosphate Sulfate adjuvant), L-histidine, polysorbate 80, sodium borate, sodium chloride and water for injection. Thimerosal-free, preservative-free, antibiotic-free and latex-free.

### Mature Minor Consent

It is recommended that parents/guardians discuss consent for immunization with their children. Efforts are first made to get parental/guardian consent for immunizations. However, children at least 13 years of age up to and including 17 years of age, who are able to understand the benefits and possible reactions for each vaccine and the risks of not getting immunized, can legally consent to or refuse immunizations in Saskatchewan by providing mature minor informed consent to a healthcare provider.

Provincial immunization fact sheets are available at [www.saskatchewan.ca/immunize](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/immunize).

**References:** [Canadian Immunization Guide](#). GARDASIL® 9 (2023) product monograph.

#### It is very important for:

- Females to get regular Pap tests when they become sexually active or by 21 years old.
- Males to do regular testicular exams.
- Females and males to be screened for anal cancer, throat and other head and neck cancers as recommended by their health professional.

**For more information, contact your local public health office, your physician, nurse practitioner, HealthLine online or by calling 811.**