

# Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine for Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Populations

(also known as Gardasil vaccine)

FACT SHEET

## What is HPV?

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI). There are more than 150 different types of HPV. Some of these types can cause cervical cancers, anal cancers, penile cancers, and cancers of the head and neck. HPV can also cause genital warts.

## How is HPV spread?

- Skin to skin contact
- Having oral, anal or vaginal sex

## What is Gardasil?

Gardasil is a vaccine that protects against common strains of HPV. This protection will help to prevent the cancers and genital warts that HPV can cause. The vaccine will not treat any HPV infections that you have had or currently have but may help to protect you against future HPV infections.

## Along with the vaccine, how else can I reduce my chances of getting and spreading HPV?

- Avoid sex and close skin-to-skin contact
- Avoid sharing sex toys
- Use a condom or dental dam every time you have sex
- Talk to your partners
- Get treated if you have genital warts

## Getting the Gardasil vaccine if you are Gay, Bi, or Trans

All individuals age 9-13 years	Receive 2 doses of free Gardasil vaccine, usually in grade 7
Any individual age 14-26 years who identifies as gay, bisexual or transgender	Receive 3 doses of free Gardasil vaccine
Any individual age 27 years and older	While the vaccine is not free for these individuals and effectiveness data may be limited or not available, the vaccine should be strongly considered for individuals who identify as gay, bisexual or transgender because of their increased risk for HPV related diseases. Please see your healthcare provider for consultation

Anyone who is immunocompromised, including individuals with HIV, should tell the nurse before receiving the vaccine.

[www.healthunit.com](http://www.healthunit.com)

**Who should not receive the Gardasil vaccine?**

- Anyone who is pregnant should wait until after the baby is born to get vaccinated
- Anyone who has a high fever or serious infection should delay getting vaccinated until they are feeling better
- Anyone who has had an allergic reaction to a previous dose of Gardasil vaccine or is allergic to any component of the vaccine (including yeast)

**Where can I get the Gardasil vaccine?**

- With your healthcare provider
- The Clinic or the Immunization Clinic at the Middlesex-London Health Unit. Check the website for hours <https://www.healthunit.com/clinics>

**What are the side effects of the Gardasil vaccine?**

Common (1-2 days)	Less Common (1-2 days)	Rare (same day)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mild pain</li><li>• Swelling in muscle or redness where vaccine was given in the arm</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mild fever</li><li>• Headache</li><li>• Nausea, vomiting</li><li>• Loss of appetite</li><li>• Tiredness</li></ul>	<p>Serious side effects or allergic reactions e.g. hives, difficulty breathing, swelling of the face or mouth, high fever (over 40C)</p> <p><b>Immediate medical assistance is required if these rare symptoms occur, see a healthcare provider or go to the nearest emergency room</b></p>

- Call your healthcare provider if any symptoms last more than a few days

Fainting can occur after any immunization or health care intervention. Working to decrease anxiety, and eating something prior to immunization can help to decrease this. Fainting is not considered a side effect or a reaction to the vaccine.

**Questions? Contact a Public Health Nurse!**  
**Middlesex-London Health Unit**  
**519-663-5317 ext.2330**  
**shots@mlhu.on.ca**  
**www.healthunit.com**

Reference: Canadian Immunization Guide: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/canadian-immunization-guide.html>