

# CANCER AND GENITAL WARTS

Protect yourself  
before you have sex  
for the first time!



**HPV VACCINATION** for young people

AT A CERTAIN POINT, SEX  
SIMPLY BECOMES PART OF LIFE.  
TO MAKE SURE YOU CAN  
ENJOY YOUR LOVE LIFE SAFELY  
AND WITHOUT WORRYING,  
YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT  
PROTECTION.

### WHAT IS HPV?

HPV is the abbreviation for *human papilloma virus*. It is a group of viruses with several subtypes. Some of these subtypes can lead to some forms of cancer developing in the genital and anal areas, as well as in the throat and mouth; others can cause genital warts.



## WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF INFECTION?

Over the course of our lives, most people will be infected with HPV. Usually, your body can deal with it on its own. But sometimes you are infected with a type, which can lead to cancer. Women are more at risk: the most common type of cancer is cervical cancer. Other types of cancer can also affect men, but they are much less common. Men and women are equally affected by genital warts: one in ten of us will suffer with genital warts at some point in our lives. The warts appear in the genital area – e.g. on your penis, inside your vagina, on your labia or in your anus – including in form of cauliflower-shaped growths.



You can be infected with HPV during sexual intercourse, but also by touching the mucous membranes of the vaginal area or of the penis. Depending on your sexual habits, the virus may appear on different parts of your body.

## HOW DO YOU CATCH HPV?

## LINKS ON THE TOPIC OF HPV VACCINATION

[www.infovac.ch](http://www.infovac.ch)  
[www.sichimpfen.ch](http://www.sichimpfen.ch)



## HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF?

The most effective protection is to be vaccinated against HPV. This is recommended to all young people. Between the ages of 11 and 14, you will need two vaccinations 6 months apart. When you have turned 15, you will need three vaccinations. Have you not yet had sex? Then for the best protection, make sure you have been vaccinated before you have sex for the first time. Even if you have already had sex, it is still worth getting vaccinated. This is recommended up to the age of 26.

Condoms and femidoms are very good protection against HIV/Aids, but their usefulness in protecting against HPV is limited, as you can also be infected just by coming into contact with infected mucous membranes.

Important: the vaccination covers the most important, but not all, cancer-causing HPV types. Regular check-ups with a gynaecologist for early detection of precancerous lesions are therefore necessary despite vaccination.

## DOES THE HPV VACCINATION ALSO PROTECT AGAINST HIV/AIDS?

No. The vaccination only protects against HPV. It does not protect against HIV/Aids or other sexually transmitted infections. You can protect yourself against HIV/Aids with condoms or femidoms.



## ARE THERE SIDE EFFECTS TO THE HPV VACCINATION?

The vaccination against HPV is safe and, in general, well tolerated. Possible harmless side effects are reddening, pain or swelling at the injection site. Headache, tiredness and fever may occur in one out of ten persons. All of these reactions usually resolve themselves within one to three days. If you have felt dizzy or weak when having earlier vaccinations, make sure you tell your doctor. Severe allergic reactions are extremely rare and occur within minutes or a few hours of the vaccination.

## WHEN CAN YOU NOT BE VACCINATED AGAINST HPV?

If you have a bad cold or are ill, you should wait until you are well again. If you are pregnant, vaccination is not recommended. If you are allergic to any of the ingredients of the vaccination, then you cannot have this vaccination. If you have any questions or concerns, talk to your doctor.

## WHY SHOULD I BE VACCINATED?

**Are you a girl?** A vaccination ...

- ... protects you against cervical cancer and other types of cancer.
- ... protects you against genital warts.
- ... is important because condoms and femidoms offer only limited protection.
- ... also protects your sexual partner.

**Are you a boy?** A vaccination ...

- ... protects you against cancer in your genital, anal, throat and mouth areas.
- ... protects you against genital warts.
- ... is important because condoms and femidoms offer only limited protection.
- ... also protects your sexual partner.

## WHAT DOES THE HPV VACCINATION COST?

If the vaccination is given as part of the cantonal HPV vaccination programme, then the costs for 11- to 26-year-olds are covered by health insurance. Ask your doctor what the procedure is for your canton.

## WHERE CAN I BE VACCINATED?

- Each canton has its own vaccination programme.
- The best thing to do is to speak to your doctor about it.

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