

# What is Human Papillomavirus (HPV)?

**Human papillomavirus (HPV) infections are the most common sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the world.**

It is estimated that around **75% of sexually active Canadians** who have not been immunized against HPV will have an HPV infection at some point in their life.

While most HPV infections will go away on their own and not cause any symptoms, infection can sometimes lead to genital warts and cancers such as cervical, penile, and neck cancers.



HPV is mainly spread through **sex involving skin-to-skin contact**, such as frontal/vaginal, oral (performed on the anus or genitals), fingering, and anal, amongst others. **Remember, you can be exposed to HPV the first time you partake in sexual activities if your partner(s) has/have HPV.**

While anyone can catch HPV, there are certain groups that get it more than others, such as people who have previously had a sexually transmitted infection (STI) and those who have a weakened immune system.

**HPV vaccines are safe and the most effective way to prevent HPV infection.**

**Talk to your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or local public health office about getting the HPV vaccine for yourself. If you have a child or adolescent, you can ask about getting it for them as well.**

