

# Protecting Your Children Against HPV-Related Cancers

Human papillomaviruses (HPV) are a family of viruses that infect the human skin and mucosa, causing six types of cancer. **HPV affects both girls and boys.**

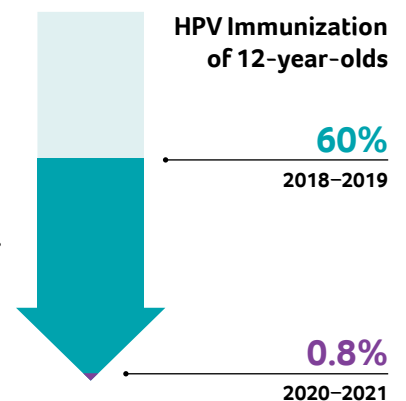
In stark contrast to most cancers, HPV-related cancers are highly preventable through vaccination. The HPV vaccine helps protect against six types of cancer.



## Ontario School-Based HPV Immunization Crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted school-based vaccination in Ontario, leaving thousands of children at risk for developing HPV-related cancers.

All grade 7 students in Ontario can currently receive the HPV9 vaccine supplied by public health units at school through the school-based immunization program. This vaccine protects against nine different HPV strains and decreases the risk of six types of cancer. About 60% of 12-year-olds were immunized in 2018–19. Alarming, this rate dropped to only 0.8% in 2020–21.



## Next Steps for Parents

If your child is in grade 7–9 within the 2021–2022 school year, they may have missed one or more doses\* of the HPV vaccine, leaving them at risk for developing HPV-related cancers. Your child is *entitled* to receive these vaccines through public health until grade 12. **Please contact your doctor or local public health unit to learn how your child can get caught up on any missed HPV immunizations.**

\*For girls and boys aged 9 to 14, HPV vaccination in the Ontario school-based immunization program is given in two separate doses. However, after age 14, three separate doses are required. Please speak to your doctor or local public health unit about the appropriate dose recommendation for your child.

This information has been reviewed for accuracy by the FMWC HPV Task Force.



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