

How do you get HPV?

“The best time to get the vaccination is before you've started having sex”

HPV (human papillomavirus) is a common STI, or sexually transmitted infection. This means it's passed from one person to another through sexual contact. It can be passed on through oral, vaginal or anal sex.

HPV can live on cells that are on the top of the skin on many body parts, like the vagina, anus, vulva, cervix, penis, mouth or throat. If you touch someone's skin or body fluids and they are infected, you could get infected. Condoms give 100% protection when they are used properly, but if there is any skin that is exposed and not covered by the condom, you are at risk.

There are many types of HPV, and some are harmless, but some can cause diseases like cancer. Sometimes HPV can give you warts on the genitals, hands and feet, but many people have HPV and don't have any symptoms. If you think that you have HPV, speak to your nurse or doctor at the clinic and they will tell you what to do next.

Girls in Grade 4 can protect themselves from HPV with vaccinations provided by school health nurses – it's free!

For more information on HPV and other sexually transmitted infections, check out the Health Issues section on B-Wise. To learn about the different parts of the vagina we mentioned here, read our article [“Vagina talk”](#).

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