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HEALTH NOTES

The Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

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It is known today that many viruses are the cause of some cancers. The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is the virus associated with genital warts as well as other common cancers like cervical cancer. Anyone who has ever had a sexual contact can be infected with this virus and once exposed there is no cure. Even though condoms will protect you from many other kinds of STIs, they do not provide full protection against this infection. HPV can be spread from skin to skin that is not covered by the condom.

To help prevent the spread of this infection and to reduce the number of new cases of cervical cancer in Canada, the government has approved free HPV vaccination for all young women in Grade 8, before they are at risk of being exposed. This vaccination is effective at preventing the four HPV types responsible for 90% of the genital warts and 70% of all cervical cancers.

Parents are encouraged to have their child immunized with this vaccine and to take this opportunity to talk to their children about sexuality and its risks.