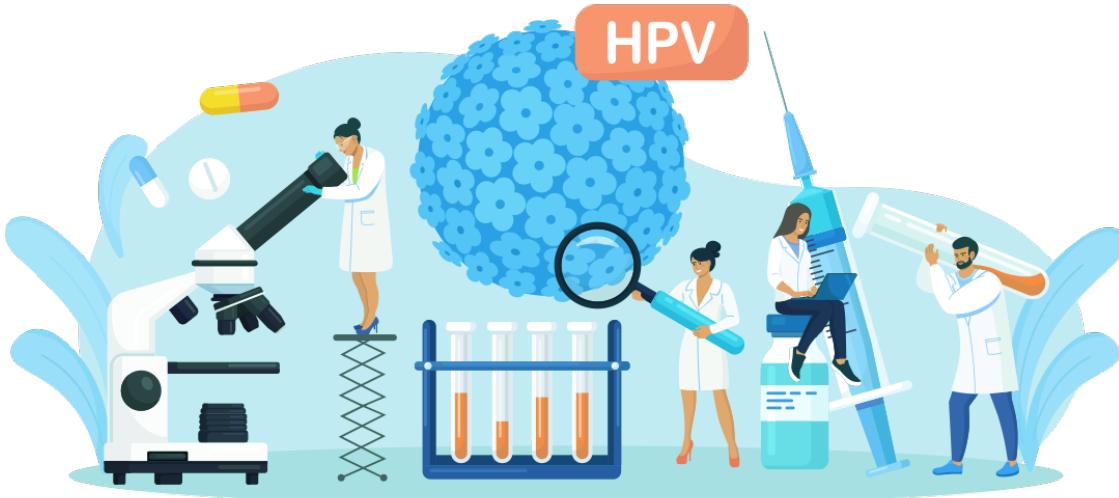


# CERVICAL CANCER:

## The cancer with the fastest rising incidence in Canada can be prevented.



**There is a national health crisis.** The incidence of cervical cancer is the fastest rising cancer in Canada and yet it is almost completely preventable. In April 2025, The Society of the Gynecologic Oncology of Canada brought together experts from across the country to develop recommendations on how Canada can eliminate cervical cancer.

### CERVICAL CANCER IN CONTEXT



The incidence of cervical cancer is the fastest rising cancer in **Canada.<sup>1</sup>**



**90%** of cervical cancers are primarily caused by infection with human papillomavirus (HPV).



Anyone can get **HPV** through any skin-to-skin sexual contact, including genitals, skin or mouth.



HPV is common and without vaccination it is estimated that more than **75%** of people in Canada will be infected at least once during their lifetime.<sup>2</sup>



It is estimated that only **64%** of Canada's eligible population (people who could have been vaccinated in school-based programs) has been vaccinated against HPV.<sup>3</sup>



Canada set a goal to achieve 90% HPV vaccination coverage for all individuals by time they reach 17-years of age by 2025. This would effectively eliminate cervical cancer by 2040.<sup>4</sup> We are not there yet, but can be.

# THE GOOD NEWS?

## Cervical cancers are preventable through vaccination and screening.

Steps to prevent cervical cancer	What can CANADIANS do	What can GOVERNMENTS do
<b>VACCINATION</b> 	Get the HPV vaccine. It is offered through school programs as well as at pharmacies and medical clinics.	Encourage HPV vaccination. Publicly fund education campaigns.
<b>SCREENING</b> 	Canadians with a cervix should participate in regular screening to catch and treat any early changes before they become cancer.	Improve access to cervical screening. Adopt HPV testing as the primary screening method, and fund and expand HPV self-collection programs.*
<b>FOLLOW-UP</b> 	If you get a screening result that requires further evaluation, talk to a healthcare provider.	Canadians who test positive for HPV need access to timely follow-up. Currently, there is no standardized approach to collecting and monitoring data on follow-up care in Canada.

\*HPV tests offer a better method of cervical cancer screening than traditional Pap tests and have the potential to be self-administered. This can increase access especially for those in remote areas or without good access to primary care.



Canada is among countries that have made it a goal to eliminate cervical cancer by, or before, 2040. Some countries — notably Australia and Sweden — are closing in on the target of fewer than four cases per 100,000 population, which is considered elimination. **Canada's rate is currently more than double that and rising.<sup>5</sup>**

### Recommendations for Government: HPV VACCINES

1. Advocate for school HPV vaccination programs. Encourage catch-up programs to ensure that every Canadian up to age 17 receives at least one HPV vaccination dose.
2. Consider a policy and evaluate the benefits in your jurisdiction of "once eligible, always eligible" to allow publicly funded access up to age 45.
3. Develop population-based strategies to identify and address reasons for hesitancy with different populations.
4. Support provincial registries to identify unvaccinated individuals and provide education to encourage vaccination.

**No other single tool is as effective in preventing cancers as the HPV vaccine.**

# Recommendations for Government: SCREENING

1. Gather and share experience and expertise developed in different jurisdictions.
2. Develop a comprehensive approach that includes strategies tailored to reach Canada's many different populations, especially under-screened populations.
3. Implement HPV testing across Canada. Only four provinces in Canada have moved to HPV screening. HPV testing finds more pre-cancers.
4. Make HPV self-collection available. This tool can reduce barriers to screening, particularly in marginalized populations. Self-collection will require a coordinated and funded system for follow-up of abnormal results, particularly for patients unattached to a primary care provider.
5. Improve the accessibility of cervical cancer screening. Support development of registries for all provinces and territories to identify people who haven't been screened and encourage screening. Registries will also improve and support follow up of abnormal results.
6. Support healthcare professionals to increase participation in cervical cancer screening. Precancer treatment saves lives.

**In 2016, there were 6.6 cervical cancer cases per 100,000 women in Canada.<sup>4</sup> In 2023, the incidence was estimated to have reached eight cases per 100,000 women.<sup>1</sup> This increasing trend has been hypothesized to be associated with suboptimal screening uptake, difficulty with accessing screening and lack of follow up.<sup>1</sup>**

It is estimated that only 64% of Canada's eligible population has been vaccinated against HPV.<sup>3</sup> The percentage of eligible people screened for cervical cancer across Canada varies from 71% to 83%.<sup>6</sup> We need to do better. **Canada needs a comprehensive approach** that includes multi-level interventions, spanning patients, providers and systemic levels to improve vaccination rates, screening, and reduce the incidence of cervical cancer to reach the goal of cervical cancer elimination.



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