



# ACCÉSSS

Alliance des Communautés Culturelles pour  
l'Égalité dans la Santé et les Services Sociaux

Three out of four persons will be infected with the **Human papillomavirus (HPV)** during their lifetime. How can you protect yourself?

This virus may seem harmless –as many persons heal eventually– but in other cases, HPV may cause genital warts, or tests may detect abnormal cells in the uterine canal, which may require biopsy, or pre-cancerous cells which may require surgery, and possibly up to 11 different types of cancers.

Vaccination against HPV has been clearly proven highly effective in the prevention of these infections, genital warts and precancerous lesions of the uterine canal. This means of prevention is offered free in all Quebec schools to both girls and boys in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade of primary school (vaccine in two doses). To be vaccinated, an authorization form is sent to parents in their children's agenda. All girls aged 9 to 18 and all persons with a weakened immune system from ages 9 to 26, can be vaccinated free. The vaccine is also recommended –although not for free– for both older women and men, in order to reduce the recurrence of lesions linked to HPV or to protect yourself from HPV before starting a new sexual liaison.

This vaccine is very safe and has not been linked to dangerous sexual behaviour in youth who have been vaccinated. Immigrants and refugees have less recourse to detection methods for HPV (for example, the cytology of the uterine canal carried out during the gynecological exam previously known as the *Pap test*). Not to be vaccinated constitutes an important risk of infections that can be very serious and can be very easily prevented thanks to this vaccine.

To know more, contact l'Alliance des communautés culturelles pour l'égalité dans la santé et les services sociaux (ACCÉSSS) at 514-287-1106 p.22.