

WELCOME TO THE

HPV & Me

Why I need the vaccine in-class guide



OVERVIEW

Created for teachers of year 7 and 8 students, this resource is designed to support education around the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine available to all Australian students in this age group through the **National Immunisation Program**. This resource has been developed by the **Australian Cervical Cancer Foundation** as HPV vaccination is instrumental in preventing cervical cancer and other cancers caused by HPV.

We recommend that the activities within this guide are presented close to the time students receive their vaccine to support and develop their understanding of HPV, the implications of this infection and the benefits of receiving the preventative vaccine. This guide frames the presentation of the main activity, a Kahoot! quiz resource, which can be completed either as a group or individual task, in the classroom or at home. Background information and links have been provided to support educator knowledge and assist with any further questions students may have, followed by suggested facilitation steps.

RESOURCES

- Interactive whiteboard (optional)
- Student devices with internet access (optional)
- Kahoot! HPV & Me quiz

CURRICULUM LINKS

Health and Physical Education: Year 7-8

- Investigate and select strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS073)
- Evaluate health information and communicate their own and others' health concerns (ACPPS076)
- Plan and use health practices, behaviours and resources to enhance health, safety and wellbeing of their communities (ACPPS077)

Cross Curricular Links:

- Biological Sciences: Human anatomy
- Science as a Human Endeavor: Ethical considerations

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By participating in the activities in this guide students will:

- Improve their understanding of HPV and the benefits of receiving the preventative vaccine
- Develop their awareness of strategies to support personal health and wellbeing

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

HPV (human papillomavirus) has been linked to a number of health concerns and cancers in both men and women. Cervical cancer is just one of those cancers. But there's a lot that can be done to prevent this from happening.

What is HPV?

HPV tells us exactly what it means: Human – something that happens to people; papilloma – causing cells or lumps; virus – an infection that is spread between people. To learn more about HPV, and watch the video that has been featured and split into smaller Sections in the Kahoot!, click [here](#).

HPV is not hereditary, it is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that is spread through skin to skin contact with the genitals of a person that has it – regardless of that person's gender or biological sex. It can be contracted through sexual intercourse or any kind of sexual touching of the penis, vagina, vulva or anus.

It is an extremely common condition with around 80% of people contracting HPV at some point in their life. Unfortunately, often HPV doesn't have symptoms, so it can be passed on without knowing. HPV is a family of viruses with over 100 different types. About 40 types are sexually transmitted. Most types are relatively harmless and will have no effect

on our health. In most cases, our immune system fights the virus and clears it from the body naturally. However, some types of HPV are more aggressive and can be difficult for our body to fight off. It's these high risk types that we need to be concerned about.

How does HPV affect us?

HPV affects all parts of the body that are involved in skin-to-skin genital contact, which includes some internal parts for people with cervixes. These parts are; penis, anus, vagina, vulva, cervix, head, throat, neck and mouth. A HPV infection can cause genital warts, which are uncomfortable and need to be treated, but aren't life-threatening.

However, long term HPV can cause cancer of any of the above body parts, the most common type being cervical cancer in people with cervixes.

Aggressive HPV can cause healthy cells to mutate and turn abnormal. If this is left unchecked, abnormal cells can multiply and grow. Over time this may develop into cancer, which can spread to other parts of the body if undetected.

How can we prevent and protect against HPV?

The best way to protect ourselves against HPV is through vaccination. The HPV vaccine helps our immune system to recognise the virus by replicating its appearance without introducing any of the 'live' virus into our body. The immune system then produces antibodies to fight off HPV cells as well as memory cells to recognise what HPV looks like if it comes across it again. This is called **immunity**. When most people in a community are vaccinated, it makes it harder for a disease to spread. This indirectly protects those who can't get vaccinated, such as people who can't be vaccinated for medical reasons. This type of protection is called **herd immunity**.

Students in years 7 and 8 across Australia are offered a single dose HPV vaccine, Gardasil 9, for free through the **National Immunisation Program**.

The free catch-up program for young people who missed their HPV vaccination is available from a doctor for those up to and including 25 years of age. This vaccine protects against 9 strains of HPV and is most effective if given before students are exposed to the virus through sexual activity.

To watch a short clip from Cancer Council Victoria about the HPV vaccine for teenagers click **here**. To better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families with understanding the importance of immunisation, you may wish to distribute the links to the **Whatchya Gunna DO** video or the **Time to get vaccinated** clip.

Other preventative behaviours have been summarised in the three S's:



Smoke-Free - Smoking exposes the body to harmful toxins which impair the immune system and make it less able to defend the body against infections.

Safe Sex - While abstinence is the only 100% effective way of avoiding HPV, practising safe sexual behaviours is the next best way to protect yourself and any sexual partners.

Condoms provide a barrier during sexual activity which decreases skin contact and prevents the exchange of bodily fluids. This lowers the risk of exposure to a number of STIs including HPV. Safe sex is also about good communication and ensuring that people feel comfortable discussing preventative measures and consent.

Screening - Regular check ups with your GP are important for everyone after becoming sexually active. Cervical screening is an essential test for people with cervixes over the age of 25 years that must be done every 5 years to ensure the cervix is healthy.

For more information on HPV, its effects and how to protect against it, visit the following websites:

- **Australian Cervical Cancer Foundation**
- **Australian Department of Health**
- **Healthdirect Australia**
- **hpv.com.au**

INTRODUCTION

Adjust the language of this section when addressing your students, depending on the timing of this session, i.e. whether it is before or after your students have received their HPV vaccination.

- Introduce the theme of preventative health. You may choose to discuss with students a variety of ways to keep our bodies healthy and free from infection or disease.
- Explain that this session will focus on an infection called the human papillomavirus, known as HPV. Ask students if they are familiar with this and discuss any existing knowledge, myths or questions students might have.

Using the background knowledge section above, explain what HPV is and how it affects the body.

For students needing more of a challenge, encourage them to conduct their own research on HPV and how to protect against it.

- **Optional** - You may choose to discuss themes around safe sexual behaviours in more detail, including the importance of consent and communication in healthy sexual relationships.
- If necessary, work through the discussion questions, either as a class or with students in pairs before discussing their thoughts and ideas.
- Explain that the Kahoot! quiz below will give students an overview of the infection, how it affects the body and how we can protect ourselves against it, specifically how the HPV vaccine helps to support our immune system.
- You may choose to present all or some of the suggested extension activities to further student learning and understanding.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is HPV?
- Where might you go for more information about your personal health?
- What vaccines are available? Who are these for?
- How does a vaccine work?

MAIN ACTIVITY

- Share the link to the Kahoot! quiz or have students visit [Kahoot.it](https://kahoot.it) and input the following code: 006993872
- Direct students to complete the quiz. This can be done individually or as a class, guided by the teacher.
- When complete, discuss how students' responses to the poll question changed by the end of the session.
- Relate the information learned throughout the session to the students' experience of receiving the HPV vaccine.

KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT

Use the questions below to gauge students' knowledge development around HPV and the preventative vaccine.

- What is HPV?
- How is HPV transmitted?
- What is the connection between HPV and safe sexual behaviour?
- What are the key things to know about HPV?

- Where could you go for more information for, and support with, your personal health?

If students have further questions relating to their experience of receiving the vaccine, this could be a good opportunity to invite the school's health team in for a Q&A, or encourage students to engage with the [FAQs](#) page of the Australian Cervical Cancer Foundation [website](#).

EXTENSION OPPORTUNITIES

- Challenge students to plan and create an awareness campaign around HPV and the vaccine to educate other students in the community. The campaign could be visual, e.g. posters; auditory, e.g. a radio ad or podcast; or physical, e.g. a community fundraising event with proceeds going to the Australian Cervical Cancer Foundation.
 - Some communities have limited access to HPV vaccination. Encourage students to create a plan with steps towards improving awareness of, and access to, the HPV vaccine. Consider how a variety of organisations and agencies could help to support this; e.g. governments, charities, corporate organisations.
 - Encourage students to conduct research into regions or countries around the world that do not have access to, or have limited access to, health care. Students choose a region and collect information to create a short presentation explaining how people in this region look after their health. Consider similarities and differences to Australia, what health practices and initiatives are being used, and how this region could help inform our own personal health practices.
- Students present to the class, noting down possible opportunities for further enquiry.
- Students work in pairs or small groups to research useful resources where teenagers can access information relating to personal health. Groups then create a digital Health Hub interactive resource, as a simple webpage, interactive. Powerpoint or similar to support other students with places to go to access health support.

RESOURCE FEEDBACK

We would love feedback from teachers and students to ensure this resource meets your needs. Those who complete the survey go in the running to win a \$100 cash card. Survey links:

- [Teacher](#)
- [Student](#)