



UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN PAPILLOMA VIRUS

HPV



**ABOUT 75% OF SEXUALLY
ACTIVE PEOPLE IN CANADA
WILL GET THE HPV VIRUS
AT SOME POINT IN THEIR
LIVES.**



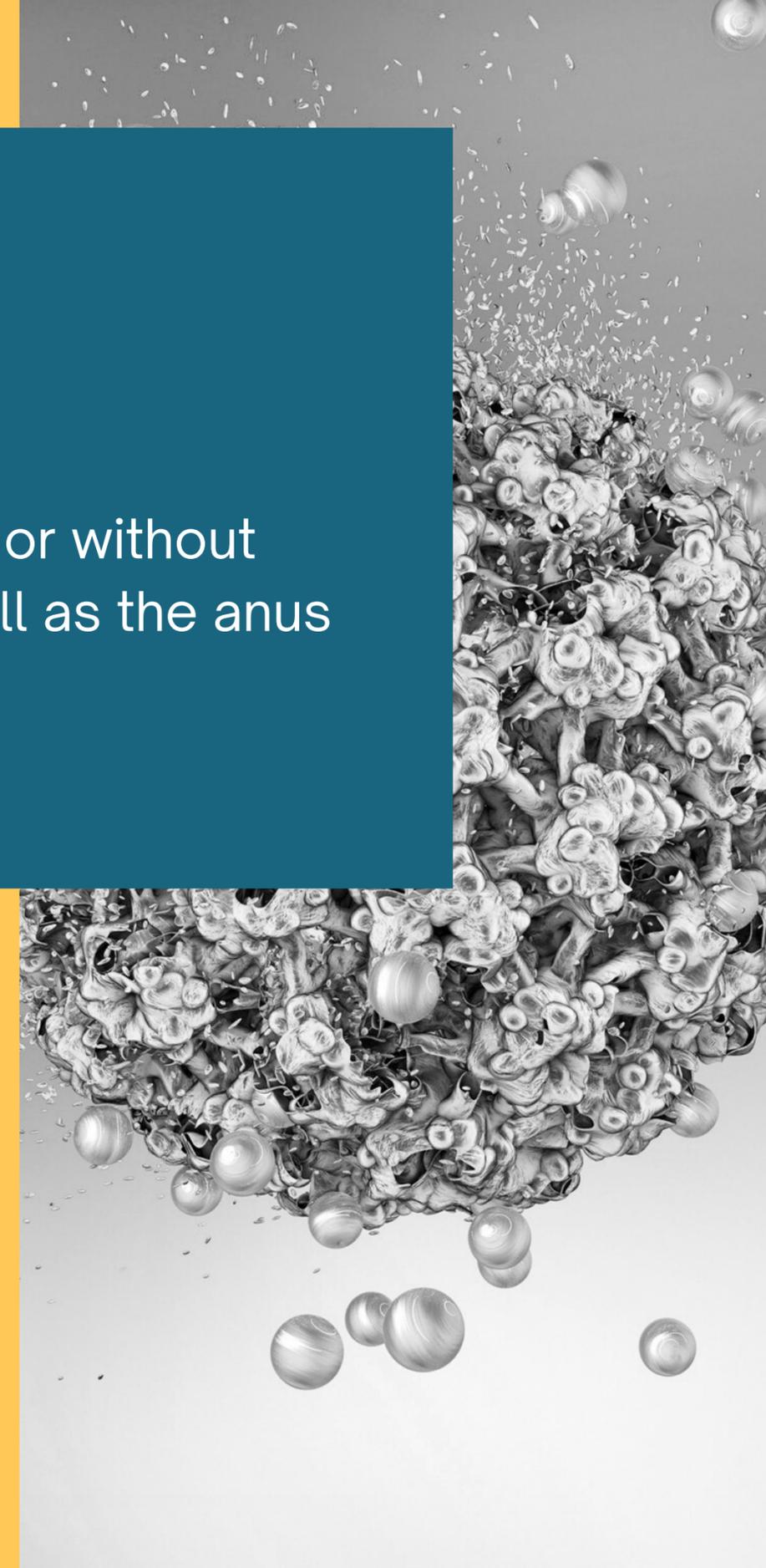
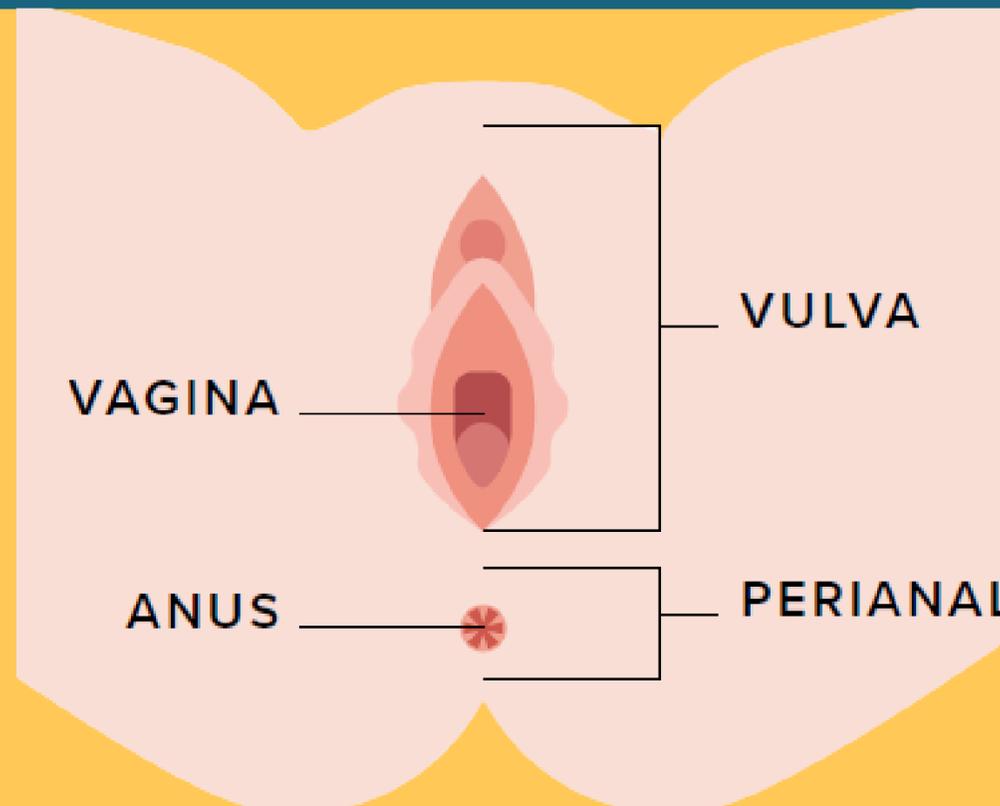
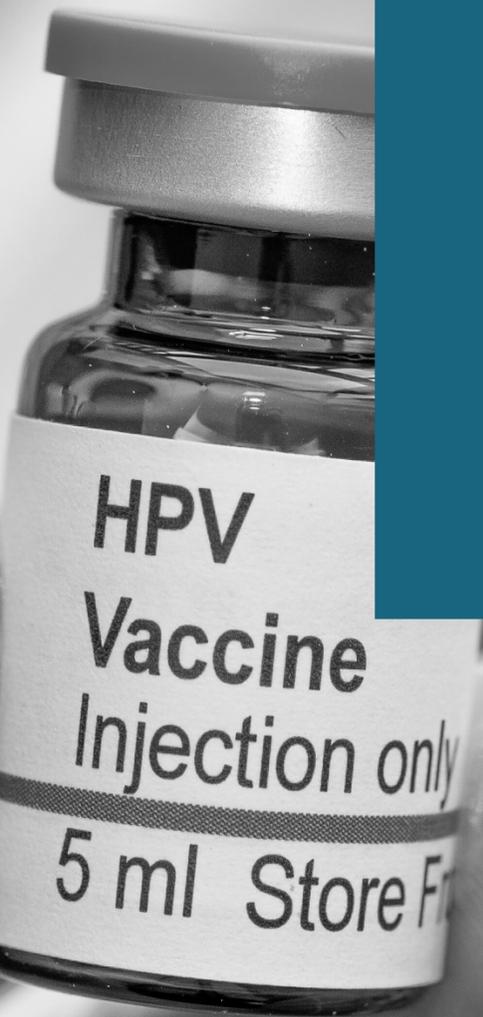
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WHAT IS HUMAN PAPILOMA VIRUS (HPV)?

HPV is a common virus spread through sexual contact, with or without intercourse. HPV can infect the vulva, vagina, and cervix, as well as the anus and perianal area (skin surrounding the anus).

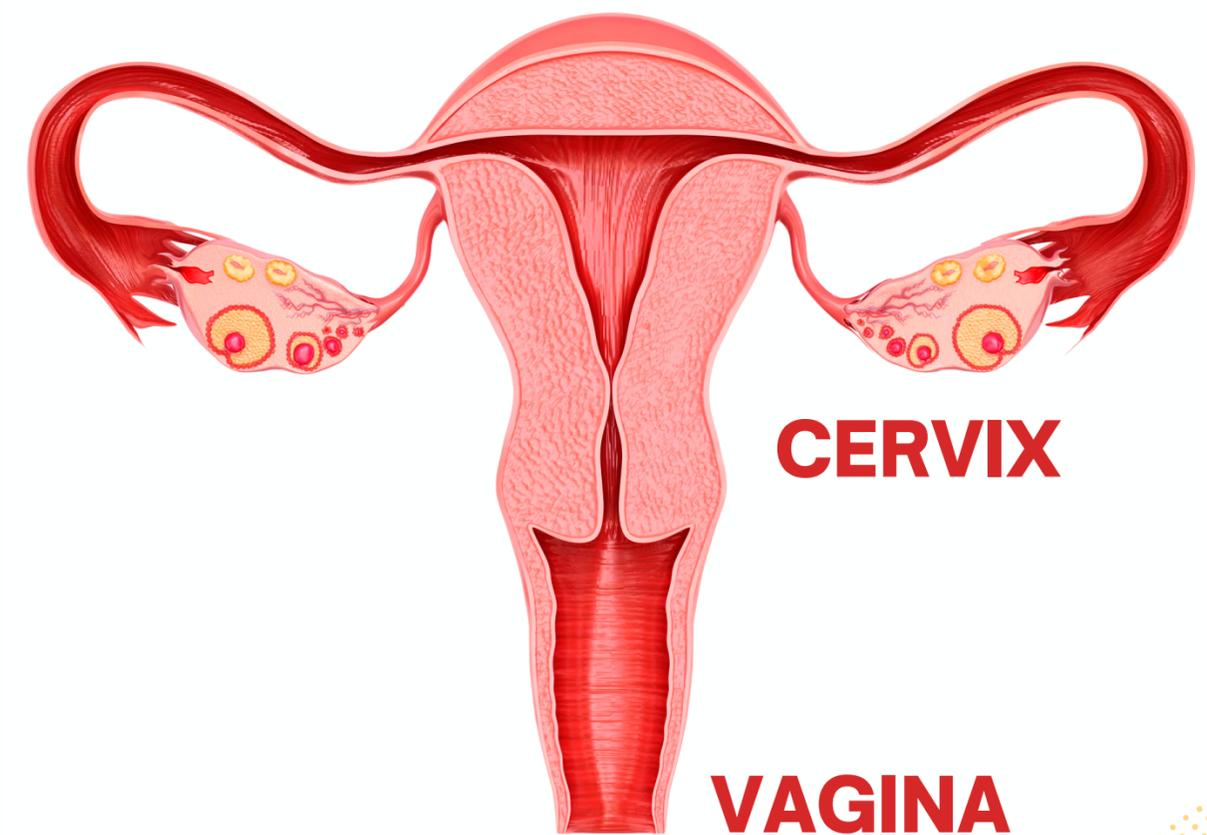


How common is HPV infection?

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in Canada. About 75% of sexually active people in Canada will get the virus at some point in their lives.

Should I worry about HPV infection?

Although the risk is low, HPV infection can lead to the development of pre-cancerous changes in affected cells. These changes can lead to an increased risk of cancer. HPV infection can also cause genital warts.



I've heard that there are different types of HPV. How can the different types affect me?

There are over 100 different types of HPV. Fifteen of them are high-risk types that can cause pre-cancerous changes and cancer. Low-risk types can cause genital warts, but not cancer. HPV types 16 and 18 are high-risk HPV types that cause about 70% of all cervical cancers. HPV 6 and 11 are low-risk types that cause 90% of all genital warts.



How does HPV cause cervical precancer and cancer?

HPV infects cells that cover the inside and outside surfaces of the body (epithelial cells). This includes the skin, throat, anus, and genital tract. In most cases, your immune system recognizes infected cells and destroys them. If they are not destroyed, you can develop an ongoing infection. As infected cells grow, they can develop precancerous changes.



Can HPV cause cancer?

Yes, HPV can cause cancer in both women and men. The most common cancer caused by HPV is cervical cancer in women and oropharyngeal cancer in men (cancer of the mouth or throat). Nearly 100% of cervical cancers are caused by HPV. Other cancers caused by HPV include vulvar cancer (cancer involving the skin outside of the opening to the vagina), anal cancer, and penile cancer.



HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE HPV?

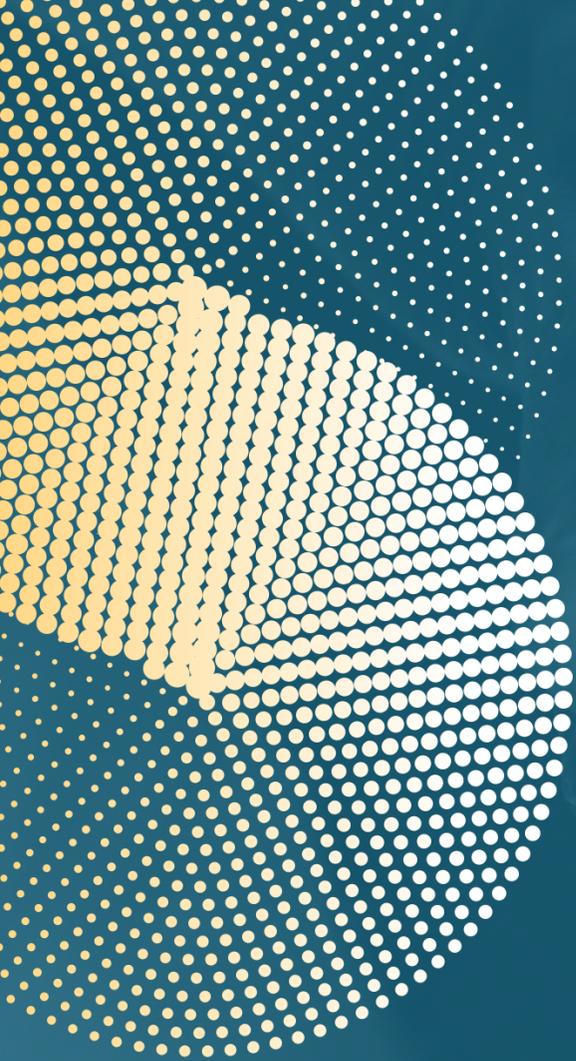
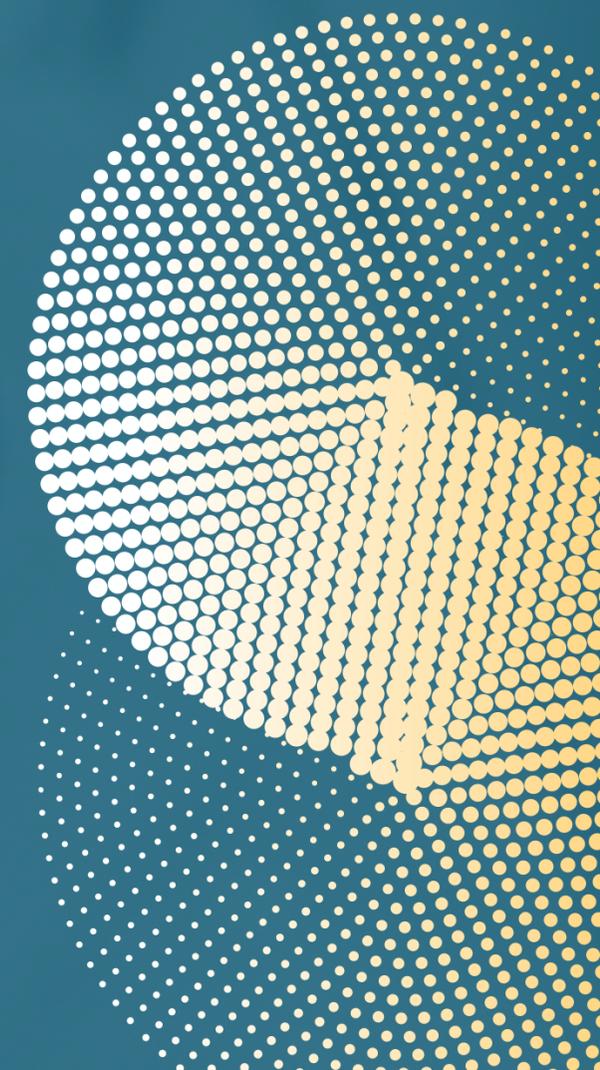
Infections with high-risk types of HPV do not usually cause any symptoms. Genital warts may be the only sign in someone who is infected with low-risk HPV.

GET TESTED
FOR HPV

IS THERE A CURE FOR HPV INFECTION?



In most cases, your body will get rid of the HPV infection without treatment within 1-2 years. However, HPV infection can persist. There is currently no cure or medical treatment for HPV. Although your body may be able to get rid of the virus, you can still become infected in the future.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

HealthLinkBC



THE SOCIETY OF OBSTETRICIANS
AND GYNAECOLOGISTS OF CANADA
LA SOCIÉTÉ DES OBSTÉTRICIENS
ET GYNÉCOLOGUES DU CANADA



precare



BC Centre for Disease Control

**TO SEE ALL THE
PATIENT
RESOURCES IN
THIS SERIES.**



SCAN ME