

# Immunizations and Cancer Prevention

## Which vaccine preventable diseases can cause cancer?

### Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)

Hepatitis B is a virus spread through:

- Contact with infected blood
- Sexual contact
- Transmission from parent to baby at birth

A long-term Hepatitis B infection can cause serious liver disease, including **liver cancer**.

Worldwide, Hepatitis B is responsible for **more than half of all liver cancer cases**.

### Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

HPV is very common. About **3 out of 4 Canadians** will get HPV at some point in their lives. It spreads easily through **direct skin-to-skin contact**.

There are many types of HPV. Certain types can cause cancer, including:

- Nearly **all cervical cancers**
- **80–90%** of anal cancers
- **40%** of vaginal and vulvar cancers
- **40–50%** of penile cancers
- **25–35%** of mouth and throat cancers

Most of these cancers are caused by HPV types that can be **prevented through immunization**.

## How do immunizations help prevent cancer?

- The **Hepatitis B vaccine is 95–100% effective** at preventing Hepatitis B infection and helps protect against liver cancer.
- The **HPV vaccine is nearly 100% effective** at preventing the most common cancer-causing HPV types.

Talk to a healthcare provider to learn which vaccines are available to you.

## What are possible vaccine side effects?

Most side effects are **mild and short-lasting**, such as:

- Soreness at the injection site
- Redness
- Swelling

Severe allergic reactions are **very rare**.

## Other ways to help prevent cancer

Almost **4 out of 10 cancer cases** can be prevented by:

- Living smoke-free
- Protecting your skin from the sun
- Eating well
- Being physically active
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Limiting alcohol intake

## Routine screening matters

- In Saskatchewan, anyone with a cervix aged 25 to 69 should have regular cervical cancer screening.
- Screening is currently recommended every 3 years, using Pap testing with HPV follow-up, as advised by the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency.

Speak with a healthcare provider about when and how often to be screened.