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## Women's Health Specialists Welcome Approval of HPV Vaccine for Women up to 45 Years of Age

Ottawa— The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) welcomes the latest breakthrough in the fight to prevent the spread of the human papillomavirus (HPV), the most common type of sexually transmitted infection in Canada.

HPV is transmitted by skin-to-skin sexual contact and can potentially affect anyone who has ever had a sexual encounter, even without penetration. Both men and women can be infected with HPV, regardless of their age. However, it is possible for someone to have the virus and not even know it because there are often no signs or symptoms.

“Just because women may be more mature in age, does not mean that they are any less vulnerable to the HPV virus. As long as women are sexually active, they are at risk and should consider vaccination,” said Dr. Ahmed Ezzat, President of the SOGC.

While vaccination works best before an individual becomes sexually active, eligible Canadians should still consider vaccination if they have had sexual relations or have had an HPV infection in the past, as they are not likely to have been exposed to all types of HPV that the vaccine protects against.

In order to ensure that people are aware of the HPV public health threat, the SOGC will continue to pursue its public education campaign emphasizing the benefits of vaccination as well as the importance of pelvic exams and Pap smear screening for women to prevent cervical cancer.

Canadians are invited to visit the [www.hpvinfos.ca](http://www.hpvinfos.ca) website for more information.

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## **About the Human papillomavirus**

The Human papillomavirus is a sexually transmitted virus that is highly contagious. Because it is transmitted by skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity, anyone who has ever had a sexual encounter, even without penetration, can contract HPV. It is possible for someone to have HPV and not even know it because there are often no signs or symptoms.

HPV is the leading cause of cervical and anal cancer in women. While using condoms is a good protection strategy, they do not provide 100% protection against the transmission of HPV, as the condom may not completely cover the infected area.

HPV is the most prevalent sexually transmitted infection in Canada. There are more than 100 different types of HPV with at least 40 that can cause genital warts and cancers such as cervical cancer.

## **About the SOGC**

*The SOGC is one of Canada's oldest national specialty organizations. Established in 1944, the Society's mission is to promote excellence in the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology and to advance the health of women through leadership, advocacy, collaboration, outreach and education. The SOGC represents obstetricians/gynaecologists, family physicians, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals working in the field of sexual reproductive health. For more information, visit [www.sogc.org](http://www.sogc.org).*