

## The HPV Vaccine

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HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) is a common virus that can cause cancers and genital warts in both men and women. Without vaccination 80% of adults will have an HPV infection at some point in their lives. In most people, the virus is harmless and causes no symptoms so you may be unaware that you have it. It is shared mainly through sexual skin-to-skin contact. Vaccination against HPV has been available for years now.

The HPV vaccine prevents human papilloma virus types that cause several cancers, including cervical, throat, anal, vaginal, vulval and penile cancers. It also prevents HPV types that cause genital warts in both females and males.

Vaccination is most effective when given prior to HPV infection i.e. before becoming sexually active. It is highly effective and very safe. Millions of doses have now been given around the world.

Girls and boys aged 9 to 26 years can receive the HPV vaccine free as part of the Ministry of Health's HPV Immunisation Programme either through school or from their GP. After this age vaccination is still available but costs approximately \$500 for the full course.

For more information go to:  
The New Zealand HPV Project Website at [www.hpv.org.nz](http://www.hpv.org.nz) or [www.justthefacts.co.nz](http://www.justthefacts.co.nz)

## New Zealand Sexual Health Society Conference 2019

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The annual conference will be held this year from 14-16 November in Wellington. The theme this year will be Tipping Points in Sexual Health. For more information go to [www.nzshs.org](http://www.nzshs.org)

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## SEXUAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

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**Canterbury**

District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha

# Welcome to Community and Public Health's Sexual Health Newsletter.

It provides up to date information to health co-ordinators in schools and others working in the area of sexual and youth health in the Canterbury/West Coast region. Any feedback is welcome.

## Congenital Syphilis (mother to baby)

Syphilis is a serious sexually transmitted disease that can also be passed from mother to baby. It can be easily treated and cured with antibiotics.

If a pregnant woman is infected and does not receive early and effective treatment she can transmit the infection to her unborn infant. This is known as congenital syphilis.

Infected babies are often stillborn or may die soon after birth. Babies born with syphilis can have severe birth defects and abnormalities. We are now seeing cases of congenital syphilis in New Zealand as more women become infected.

Congenital syphilis is easily preventable and treatable – as long as testing and treatment are provided to pregnant women early during antenatal care. The risk of adverse outcomes to the foetus is minimal if a pregnant woman who is infected with syphilis receives testing and adequate treatment with benzathine penicillin

early in pregnancy – ideally before the second trimester. Their sexual partners also need to be followed up for testing and treatment.

Symptoms of infection in adults can include a sore or ulcer on the genitals, anus or mouth that is usually painless, often followed by a skin rash, usually on your hands or feet. Other symptoms can be swollen glands, fever, hair loss, muscle and joint pain, headaches, vision changes, mouth ulcers and fatigue. However, often people have no symptoms at all. Diagnosis is by a blood test.

Globally, estimates show that there were more than half a million (around 661,000) total cases of congenital syphilis in 2016, resulting in over 200,000 stillbirths and neonatal deaths.

Source: [www.who.int/reproductivehealth/congenital-syphilis-estimates/en/](http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/congenital-syphilis-estimates/en/)

For more information about syphilis go to: [www.cph.co.nz/OrderResources/SexualHealth/What is Syphilis?](http://www.cph.co.nz/OrderResources/SexualHealth/What%20is%20Syphilis?)

## Youth and porn – new research

In 2018 the Office of Film and Literature Classification surveyed more than 2,000 New Zealand teens aged 14-17 years old for the major research project *NZ Youth and Porn: Research Findings of a survey on how and why young New Zealanders view online pornography*.

### Some key findings were:

- more than two thirds of NZ teens have seen porn
- one in four first saw porn before the age of 12
- 71% were not seeking out porn when they first saw it
- 73% of regular users use porn as a learning tool
- 69% of regular users have seen violence or aggression on porn
- 72% of regular users have seen non-consensual activity on porn
- 89% agree that porn should NOT be seen by children
- 71% believe that children and teen's access to online porn should be restricted. This includes half (51%) of regular viewers.

“This survey has been an opportunity to get young people's experiences on the table – to give them a voice to tell us how and why they are viewing pornography. We feel it is vital to put our young people front and centre in the debate around internet porn.

Listening to what they have to say will give us the best chance to make a difference, and to help them” says Chief Censor, David Shanks.

The Chief Censor has established an inter-agency Pornography Working Party, with members from Internal Affairs, Netsafe, ACC, Police, the Ministries of Health, Education, Social Development and the Ministry for Women.

Strategies may include regulation, education and tools and information for young people, parents and schools. Comprehensive sexuality education would also provide a “counter-narrative to porn that can reach a wide number of young people.”

To read the full research report go to: <https://www.classificationoffice.govt.nz/news/latest-news/nzyouthandporn/> (use Chrome browser)

## Sexual Health Seminars for 2019

The annual Sex and Consequences seminar was held this year on 12 June with over 90 people attending.

Topics covered included an update on syphilis and gonorrhoea, sexual and gender diversity, the new research on young people and porn, and a collaborative project which has improved relationships between street sex workers and local residents.

Two further sexual health seminars will be held at CPH during 2019. The dates are 26 September and 21 November, both Thursdays from 1pm to 4.30pm.

On 26 September Deborah Bush from EndoNZ will speak about endometriosis, and Jayne Thomas from Canterbury Immunisation Ltd on the HPV vaccine and how it is delivered in our region.

On 21 November the focus will be on sexuality education. Tracy Clelland from the University of Canterbury will give an overview of what is happening with sexuality education in New Zealand. Also Akira Le Fevre from the Family Planning Education Unit will talk about the educational programmes they deliver.

Detailed flyers will be sent out closer to these dates.