

**2020–2021 SCHOOL YEAR
TO THE PARENTS OF SECONDARY 3 STUDENTS**

RE: School vaccination program

As part of the school vaccination program, some vaccines will be offered to students in Secondary 3. The legal age for healthcare consent in Québec is 14. Parental consent is therefore not required if your child wants to get vaccinated at school. Please review the information below so you can help your child navigate the vaccination process.

Vaccines offered

Tetanus and diphtheria vaccine

Your child will have the opportunity to receive a dose of the Td vaccine, which protects against tetanus (T) and diphtheria (d). Tetanus and diphtheria are very serious diseases caused by bacteria. That's why it's important for teenagers to receive a vaccine that maintains their immunity against these diseases.

Meningococcal serogroup C vaccine

Meningococcus is a bacteria that can cause severe infections such as meningitis and blood poisoning (septicemia). A dose is administered at 1 year of age, but since teenagers are at high risk for meningitis, experts in Québec recommend they get a booster in Secondary 3.

Vaccination record update

Before proceeding with the vaccination, the nurse will review your child's file and vaccination record to make sure he or she is up-to-date on vaccinations against the following diseases: tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, measles, rubella, mumps, meningococcal serogroup C infection, chickenpox, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and HPV infections. The nurse will then be able to administer any missing vaccines. If your child did not receive two doses of HPV or hepatitis vaccine in Elementary 4, an initial dose can be administered at the same time as the Td vaccine and meningococcal serogroup C conjugate vaccines and the second dose six months later at school.

These diseases still exist and can be contracted, so it is important for your child to be protected. The vaccines are safe and effective. For chickenpox, a child who was vaccinated or became ill after age one is considered protected.

Your child should bring his or her vaccination record, but the nurse will be able to offer the recommended vaccinations regardless.

HPV vaccine

HPV stands for human papillomavirus. HPV is one of the most common viral infections in the world and comes in many different types. You can be infected by more than one type of HPV at the same time, or be infected by the same type more than once. Some types of HPV can cause condyloma (genital or anal warts), precancerous lesions on the genitals or cervix, or cancers of the cervix, vagina, vulva, penis, anus, and throat. HPV is transmitted through intimate skin-to-skin or mucous membrane contact, most often during sexual activity, even without penetration. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI). An infection may go away on its own over time, or it may lie dormant for years without signs or symptoms before turning into cancer. Other types of HPV can cause genital warts, which may or may not be visible to the naked eye. Genital warts do not cause cancer and generally go away on their own, but their treatment can be painful and may require several doctor's visits.

The HPV vaccine has been offered to both boys and girls in Elementary 4 since September 2016. When it launched, in 2008, the vaccination program was aimed at preventing cervical cancer, so it was originally offered only to girls. Since then, a number of scientific studies have shown that HPV vaccines protect boys against types of HPV that cause genital warts, penile cancer, anal cancer, and some throat cancers. For maximum protection, the vaccine should be given before young people become sexually active, which is why it is recommended in Elementary 4.

Since September 1st 2018, youths who have not been vaccinated in Grade 4 can be vaccinated free of charge, just like girls, as part of the update of the vaccination record in Secondary 3. As part of the school vaccination program, 2 doses of HPV vaccines are offered: 1 dose of Gardasil 9[®] followed by 1 dose of Cervarix[®] 6 to 60 months later. This vaccination produces a stronger immune response against HPV types 16 and 18 than 2 doses of Gardasil 9[®]. HPV 16 is responsible for most HPV-related cancers, especially cancers that affect men. Furthermore, this vaccination also provides immunity against the seven other types of HPV in Gardasil 9[®]. The experts recommend this schedule for all young people aged less than 18.

The usage of the Cervarix[®] vaccine in boys has never been submitted by the manufacturer for approval in Canada. However, scientific data, including data from a study conducted in Québec, shows that this vaccine is safe and produces a similar immune

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response in boys and girls. It is also approved in Europe for boys and girls age 9 and over. Since September 2018 Norway too has been vaccinating both boys and girls with two doses of Cervarix®.

The HPV vaccine offers no protection against other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Wearing a condom is the best way to protect against STIs but not HPV, since condoms do not cover the skin around the genital organs. In addition, condoms are often not used for the entire duration of sexual contact.

There is no risk in receiving several vaccines in one session. This is a safe, standard practice around the world. The Cervarix® vaccine causes slightly more reactions than the Gardasil 9® vaccine.

You can find more information on HPV and the HPV vaccine at:

- Government of Québec: Quebec.ca/vaccination
- Government of Canada: www.canada.ca
- Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada: <http://hpvinfo.ca/>

Your child will receive a fact sheet on potential side effects that could appear within 24 to 72 hours of vaccination and how to relieve them.

Vaccinations at Fernand-Lefebvre will take place on **October 13-14-15th 2020.**

Please make sure your child brings his or her vaccination record. It will be updated with any vaccines that are administered. Health insurance cards are not required.

If you would like more information, please contact the school nurse, Josée Léveillé at 450-742-5901 poste 1521.

For more information on vaccination and vaccine-preventable diseases, visit the Vaccination section of the Government of Québec website at Quebec.ca/vaccination

Thank you for your cooperation.

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