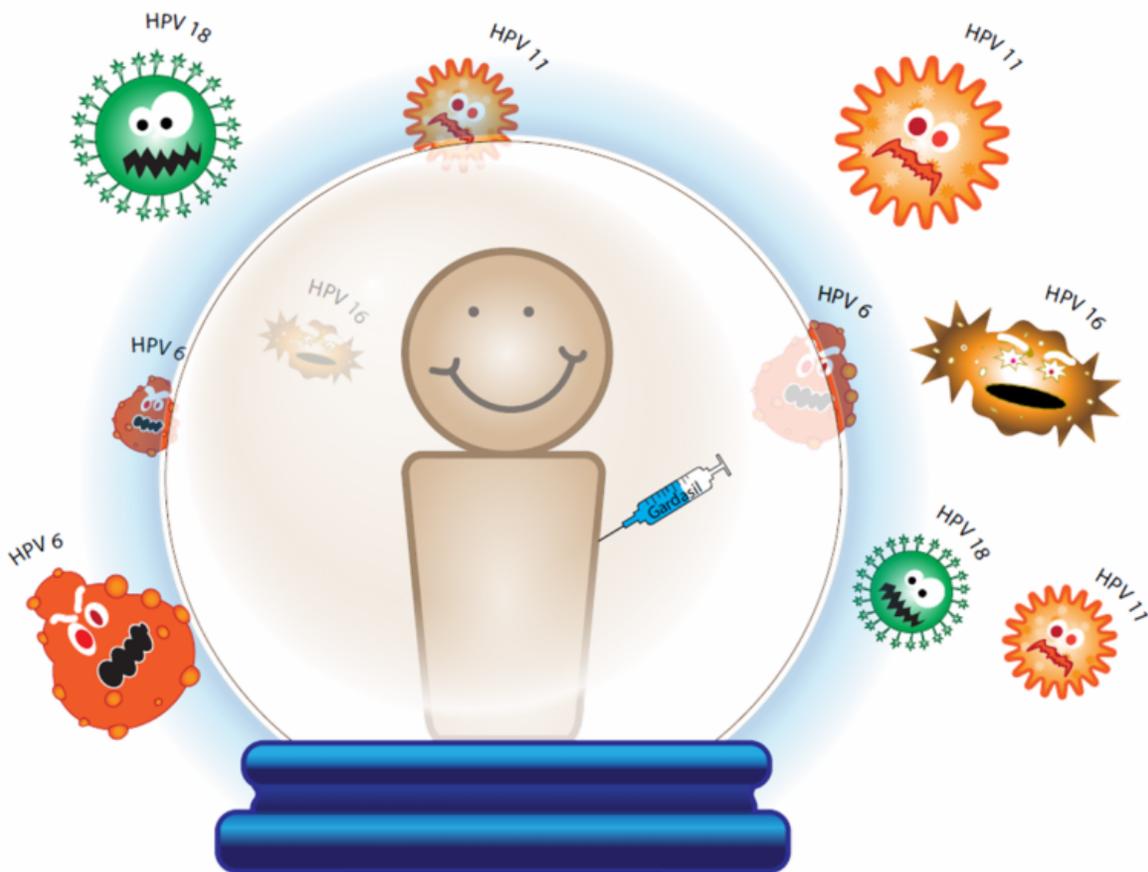


# HPV-vaccinated women protect men from infection

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Credit: Fresh Science

A Melbourne study has found the first evidence of 'herd protection' from vaccinations against the cervical cancer-causing human papillomavirus

(HPV).

Eric Chow from Alfred Health has found that women who vaccinate against HPV not only protect themselves, they also protect their [male partners](#) from the virus.

There are over 100 different types of HPV, some of which are known to cause cancer. The disease is well known for its impact on women, but it can also cause [genital warts](#), penile and [anal cancer](#) in men.

In an 11-year study (2004 to 2015), Eric found a dramatic decline in the prevalence of vaccine-targeted types of HPV in young Australian men—from a 20 per cent prevalence in 2004, down to just three per cent in 2015.

These males were unvaccinated, suggesting that their vaccinated female partners were protecting them from the virus. This herd protection hasn't been seen in HPV before.

While the vaccination program for girls was brought into schools in 2007, the program wasn't introduced for boys until 2013.

The current vaccine available in Australia is effective against four types of HPV. But a new vaccine is on the way that will protect against another five types.

This is the first study in the world to assess the annual trends in vaccine-targeted HPV genotypes in men before and after the introduction of the female HPV vaccination programme. The research was published in the journal *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* in June.

**More information:** Mark Schiffman et al. Control of HPV-associated cancers with HPV vaccination, *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* (2016).

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