

MERCK CANADA PULSE REPORT

HPV Awareness in Canada

March 2026



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Context & Objectives

The survey examined respondent attitudes toward immunization in general and public-health-related disease areas, with a particular focus on human papillomavirus (HPV).

Rising rates of certain HPV-related cancers in Canada underscore the need to better understand gaps in awareness and barriers that may affect prevention efforts.

To this end, the survey assessed respondents' knowledge of HPV and its connection to certain cancers and diseases. The findings identified some key knowledge gaps by gender, age and region—showing where trusted information is needed along with perceived roles on prevention.



Research Design



Methodology

Online survey – Ipsos iSay panel, mobile compatible, conducted in English and French.

Fielding:

Data collection from March 6th to March 11st, 2026

Questionnaire Length:

3 minutes average



Sample

1,000 respondents


Canadian population

Aged 18 to 47 years old



Data Processing

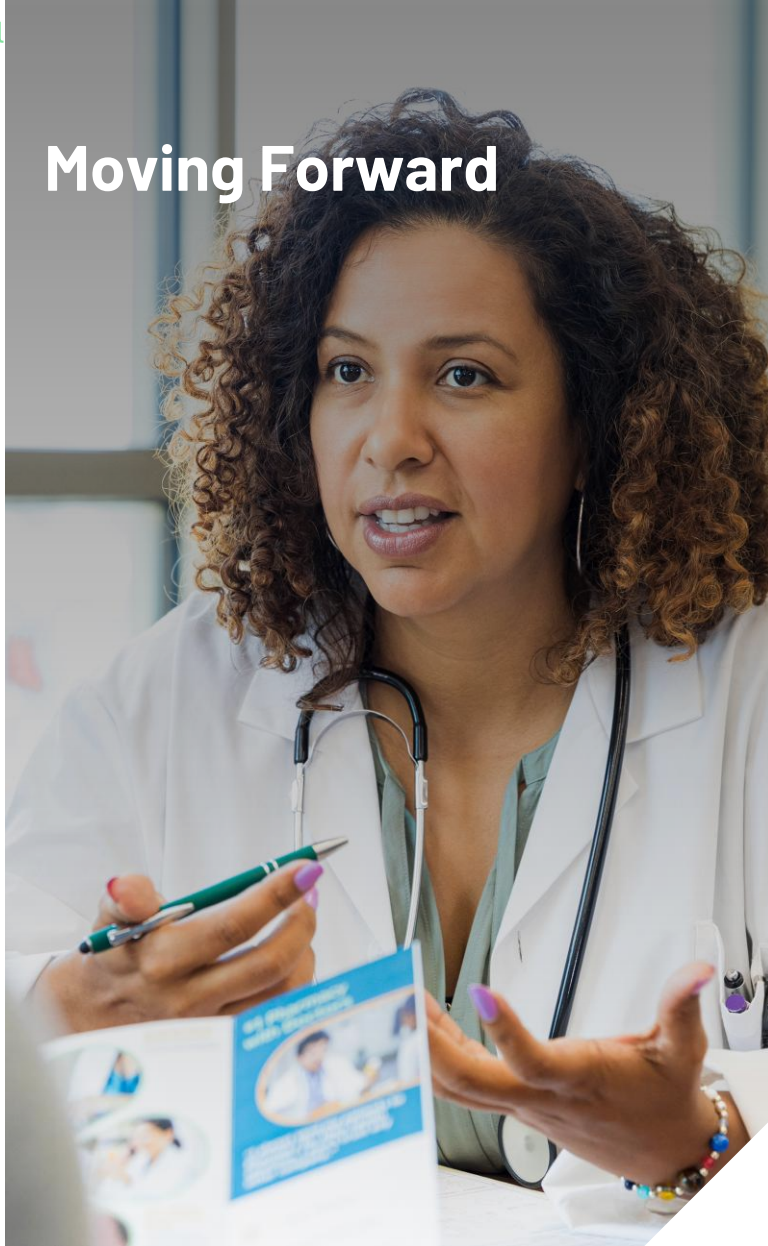
Data weighted to reflect the overall Canadian population in terms of gender, age and region.

Coloured numbers (xx%/xx%) and bubbles  indicates that this group is significantly **higher** or **lower** than other demographics within the same category/demographic.

Credibility Interval: The poll is accurate to within ± 3.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians aged 18-47 been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Moving Forward



The attitudes of the respondents toward vaccination displayed an encouraging trend.

Most of the respondents expressed a positive sentiment towards vaccines (72%) and had a high confidence in vaccine research, safety, and efficacy (65%).

Furthermore, about three-quarters of respondents acknowledged the importance of staying current with recommended vaccines and keeping up with immunizations to protect future generations.

Awareness levels varied significantly across different demographics.

More than half of respondents were aware that HPV is a sexually transmitted infection and around 6 out of 10 knew that HPV could cause certain types of cancer. Women

showed greater awareness while among young adults (18-24 years), understanding remained more limited.

Concerning the impacts of HPV on women's health, nearly half of the respondents reported being informed, with a significantly high proportion among women (57%). Awareness of HPV's impacts on men's health was lower, although a little more than a third (36%) were aware that the virus could cause genital warts and certain cancers in men. Women tended to be more knowledgeable about these impacts than men.

Regarding information-seeking behaviour, about 4 in 10 looked for information on HPV, with women being more inclined to be informed (46%) compared to men. A family doctor or general practitioner was the most preferred source of information for HPV (66%), especially among women (73%).

There was a high engagement in reducing the risk of HPV, while willingness to discuss HPV can be enhanced.

Among respondents, nearly two-thirds believed they played a significant role in minimizing the risk of contracting or spreading HPV. This belief correlated with a high likelihood of taking preventative actions (65%), particularly among women (74%).

Around 44% were open to discussing HPV with their social circles. However, respondents reported some barriers to discussing HPV with healthcare professionals, such as a lack of awareness or being in a monogamous relationship.

DETAILED RESULTS

SENTIMENT TOWARD VACCINATION

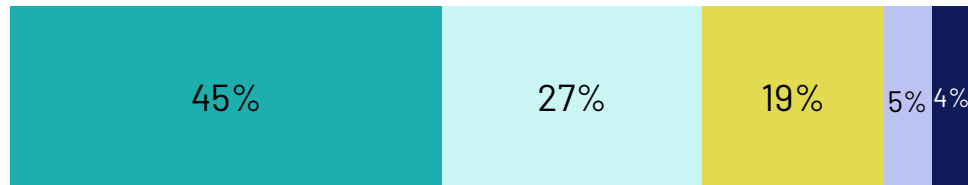
01

Vaccination Sentiments and Trust Levels among Respondents

Seven out of ten respondents affirmed a positive sentiment toward vaccination. Trust levels in vaccine research, safety, and efficacy were also high, with nearly two-thirds of respondents stating they trusted these aspects. Only about one respondent out of ten stated they had a negative sentiment toward vaccination or held a low trust level in vaccine research, safety and efficacy.

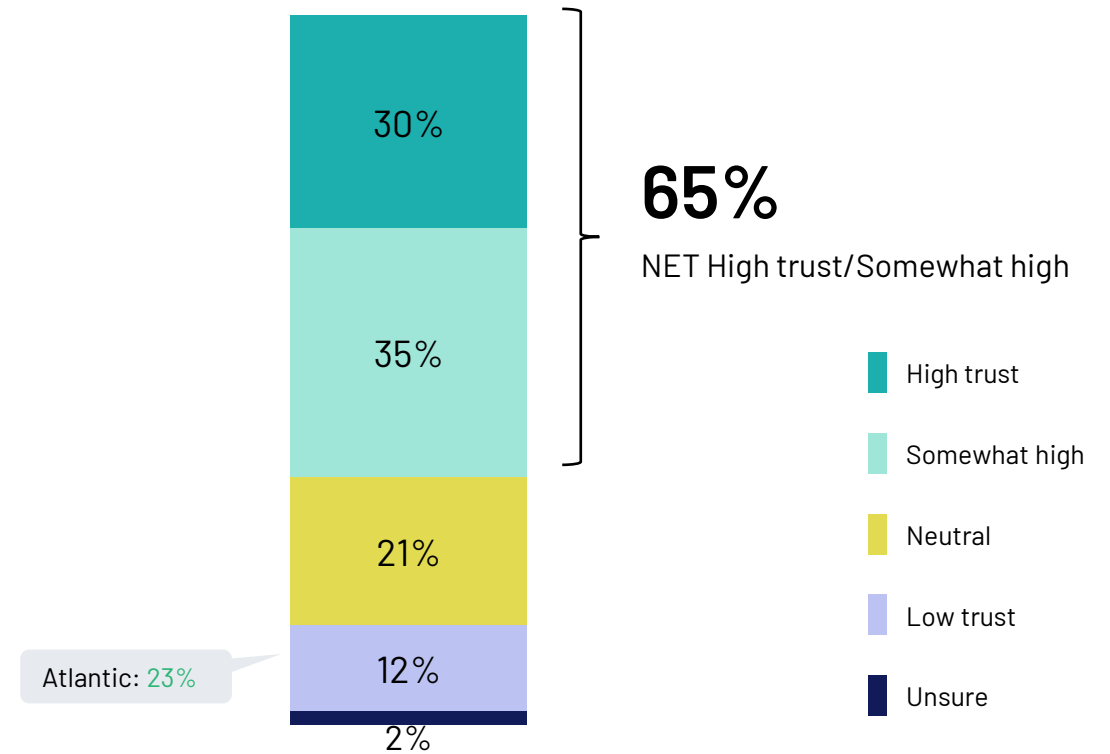
Reported Sentiments on Vaccination

Very positive Somewhat positive Neutral Somewhat negative Very negative



72%
Very positive/Positive

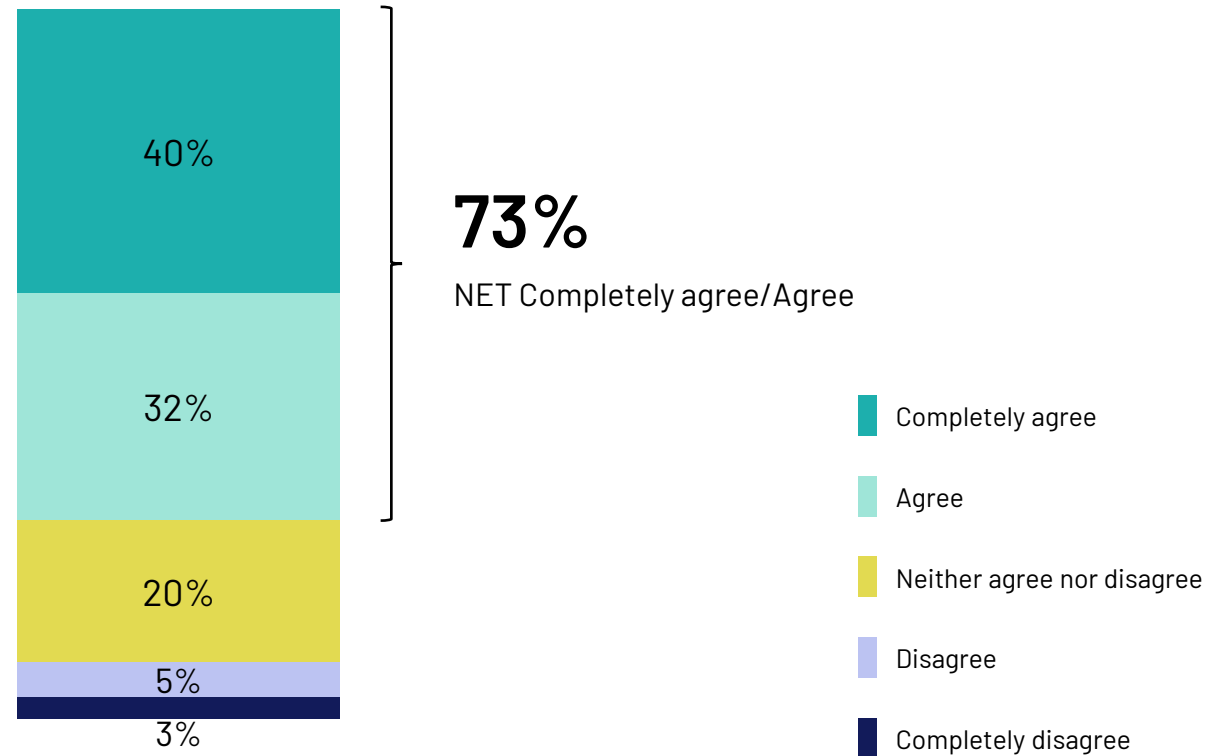
Trust Levels in Vaccine Research, Safety, and Efficacy



QV1. Overall, what is your current sentiment toward vaccination as being part of maintaining the health and well-being of Canadians?
 QV2. How would you rate your level of trust when it comes to vaccine research, safety and efficacy in general?
 Base: All respondents (n=1000)

Importance of Staying Up-to-Date on Vaccinations

Near three-quarters of respondents agreed that staying up to date on recommended vaccines was important for helping protect their family's health and their own.

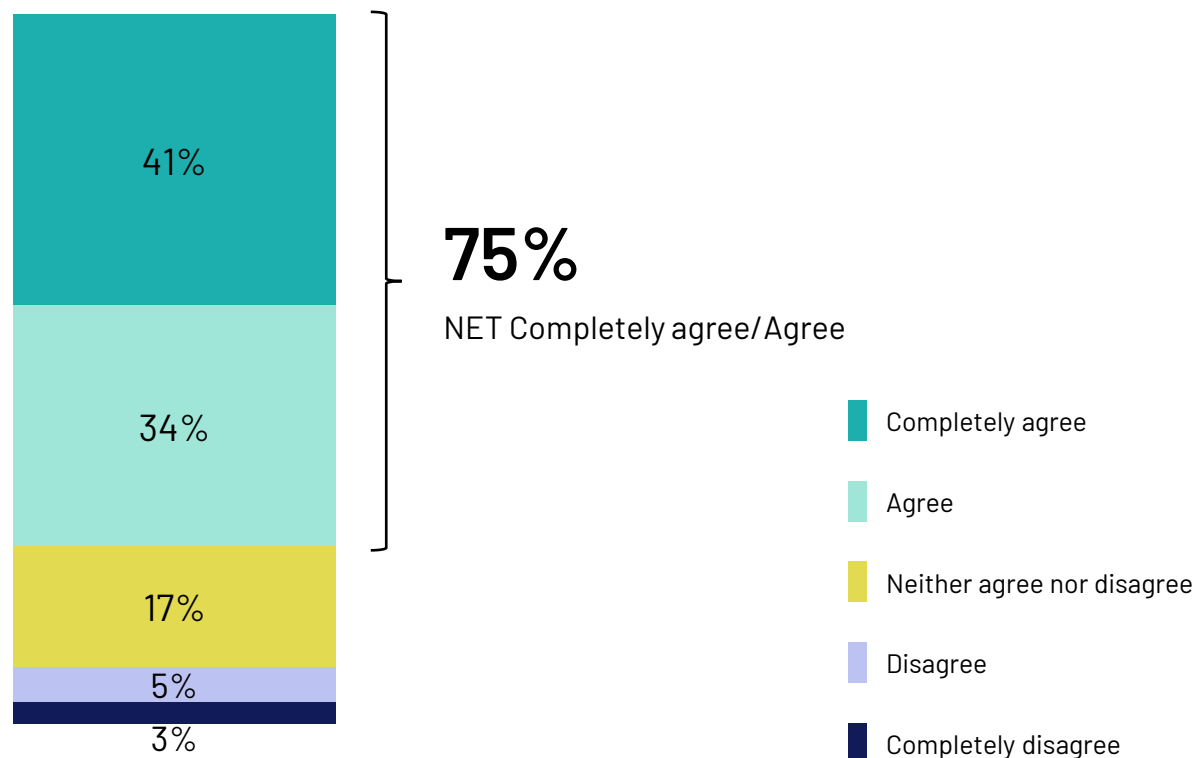


QV3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: "Staying up to date on recommended vaccines is important to help protect my health and my family's health."

Base: All respondents (n=1000)

Perception of Role of Immunization in Helping Protect Future Generations

Three-quarters of respondents believed keeping up with immunizations played a role in helping protect future generations.



QV4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: "Keeping up with immunizations is part of helping protect future generations of Canadians."

Base: All respondents (n=1000)

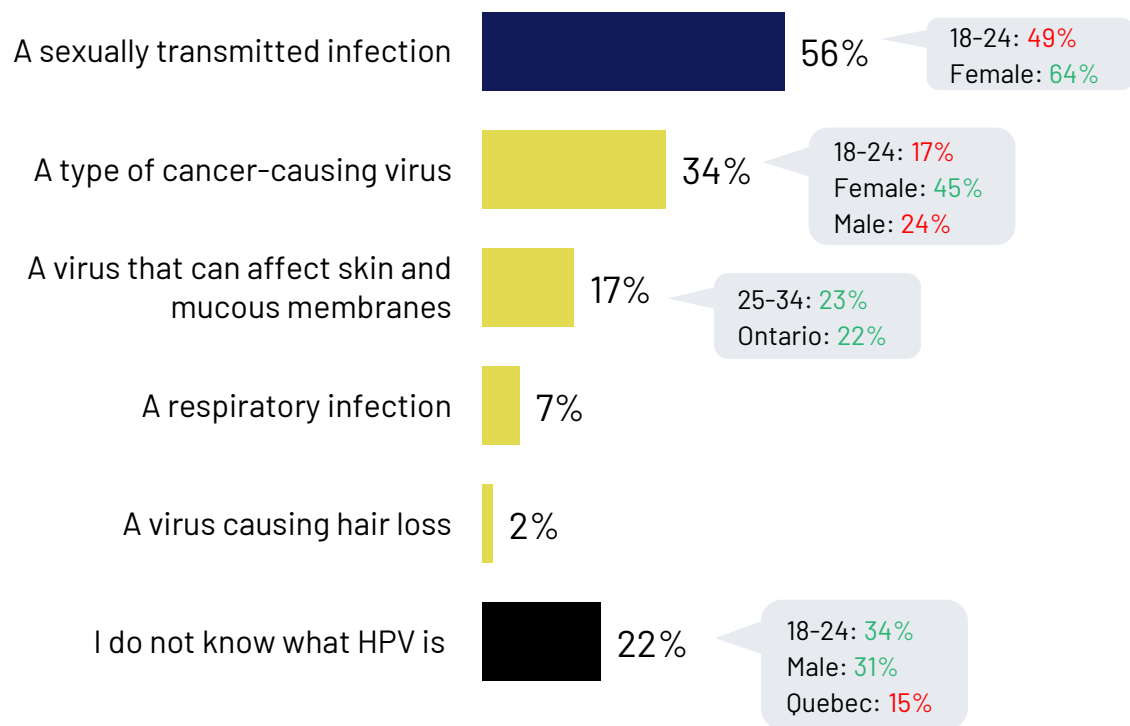
HPV AWARENESS

02

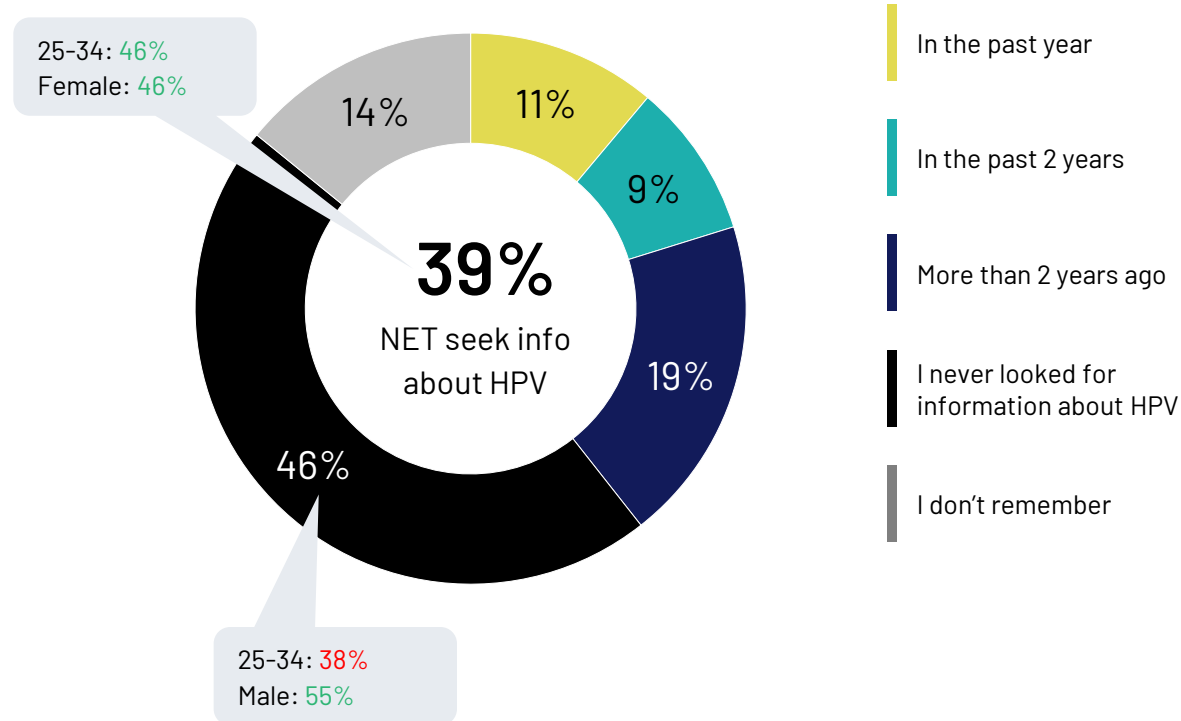
Awareness and Information-Seeking Behaviour Regarding HPV

More than half of respondents were aware that HPV is a sexually transmitted infection, which was lower among the younger age group and higher among women. About 4 out of 10 respondents had searched information about HPV in the past. Women and respondents aged 25 to 34 y.o. were more inclined to seek information about HPV.

Awareness and Knowledge of HPV



Recent Inquiries on HPV



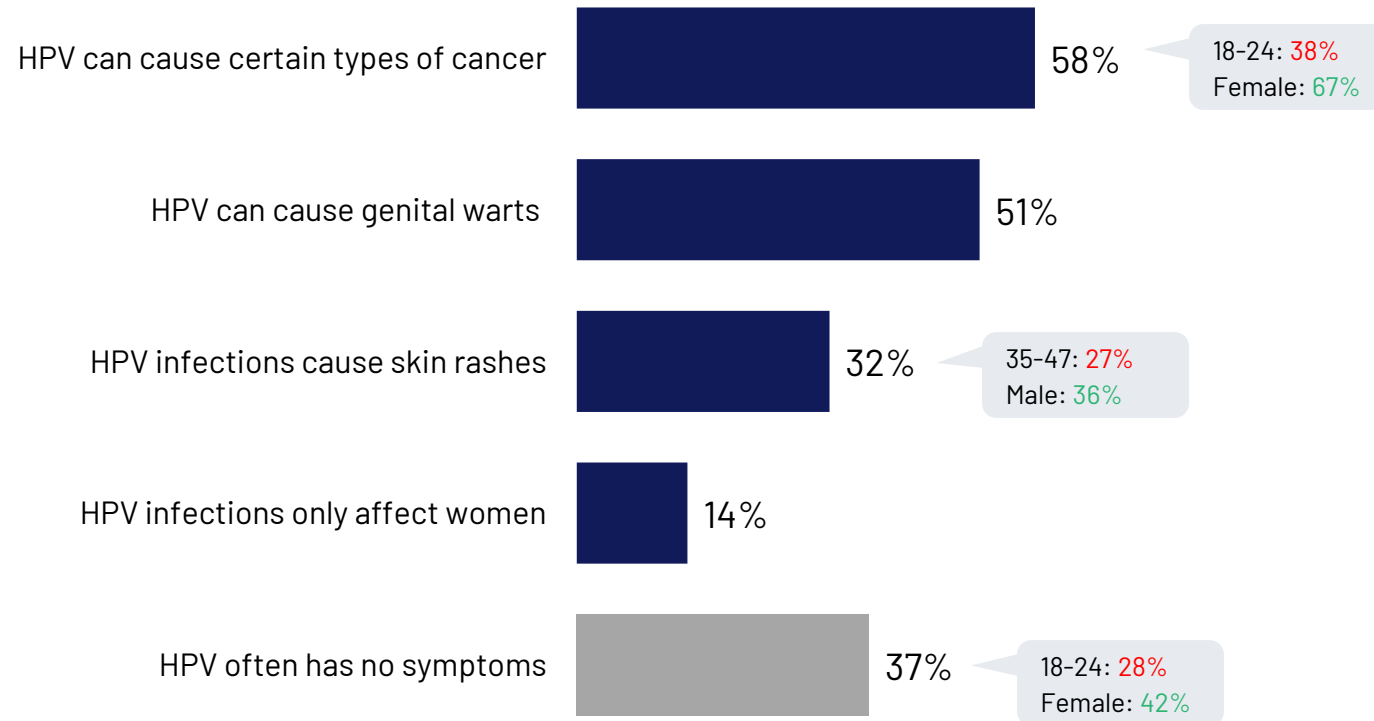
Q1. Do you know what HPV (human papillomavirus) is? Please select all that apply. HPV is...

Q2. HPV is a common sexually transmitted infection. When did you most recently seek out information about HPV (human papillomavirus)?

Base: All respondents (n=1000)

Perceptions of Symptoms About HPV Infections

The main perception among respondents about the symptoms caused by HPV was that it caused certain types of cancer, and women were even more inclined to think so. The main perception among younger respondents was that HPV could cause genital warts, and they were less inclined to think that HPV had no symptoms.



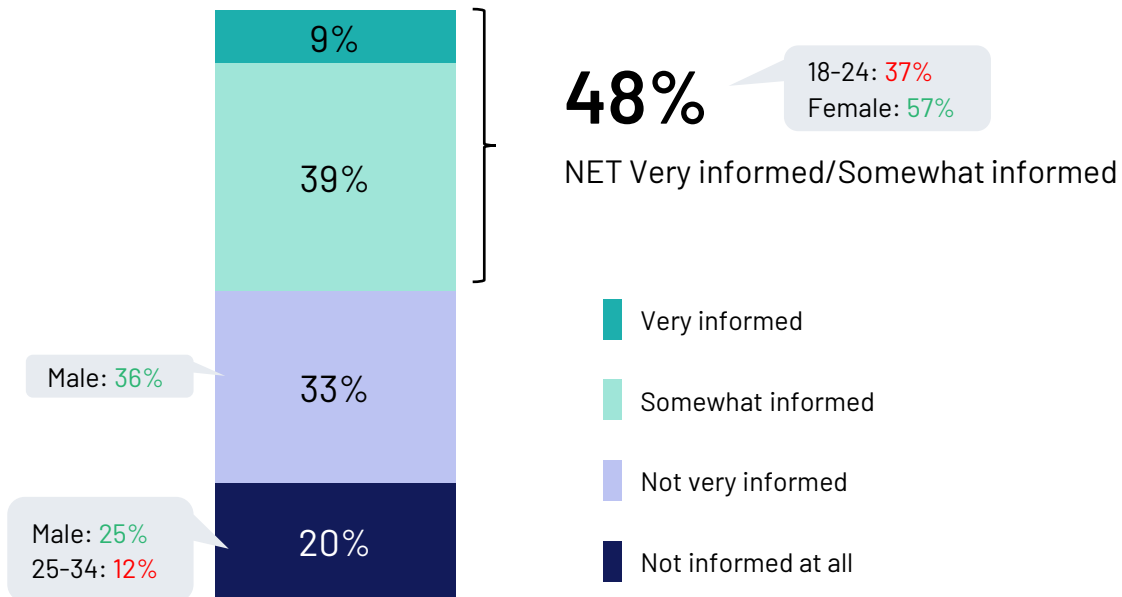
Q3. Which of the following statements about HPV infections are true?

Base: All respondents (n=1000)

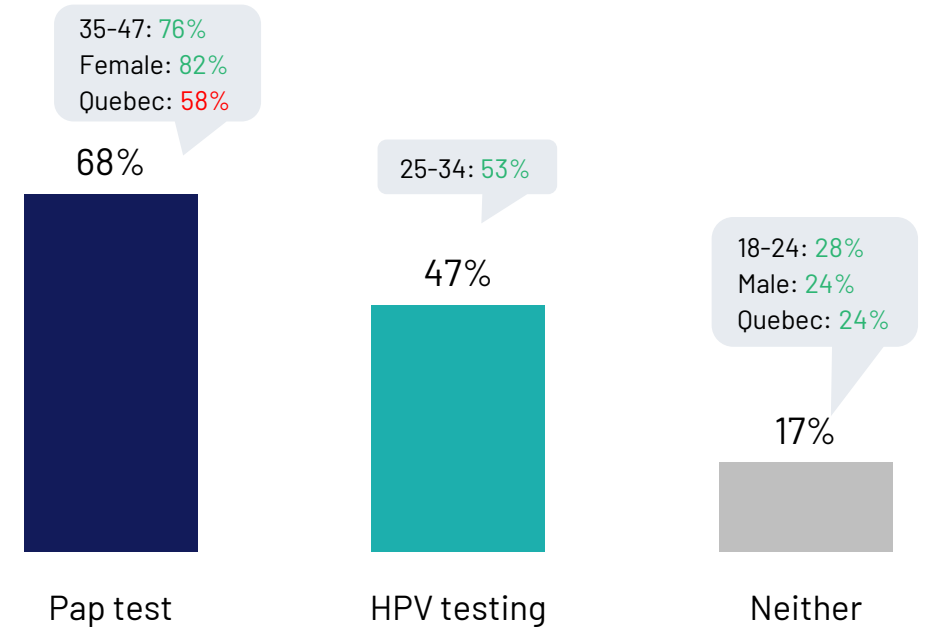
Awareness of HPV's Impact on Women's Health and Cervical Cancer Screening Methods

Nearly half of respondents reported being informed about how HPV can affect women's health. Women had a greater sentiment of being informed compared to men, and younger respondents felt they were less informed. More than two-thirds of respondents knew about the Pap test as a cervical cancer screening method, while nearly half were aware of HPV testing. More younger respondents, men and those living in Quebec were not aware of those methods.

Sentiment of Being Informed About How HPV Can Affect Women's Health



Awareness of Cervical Cancer Screening Methods



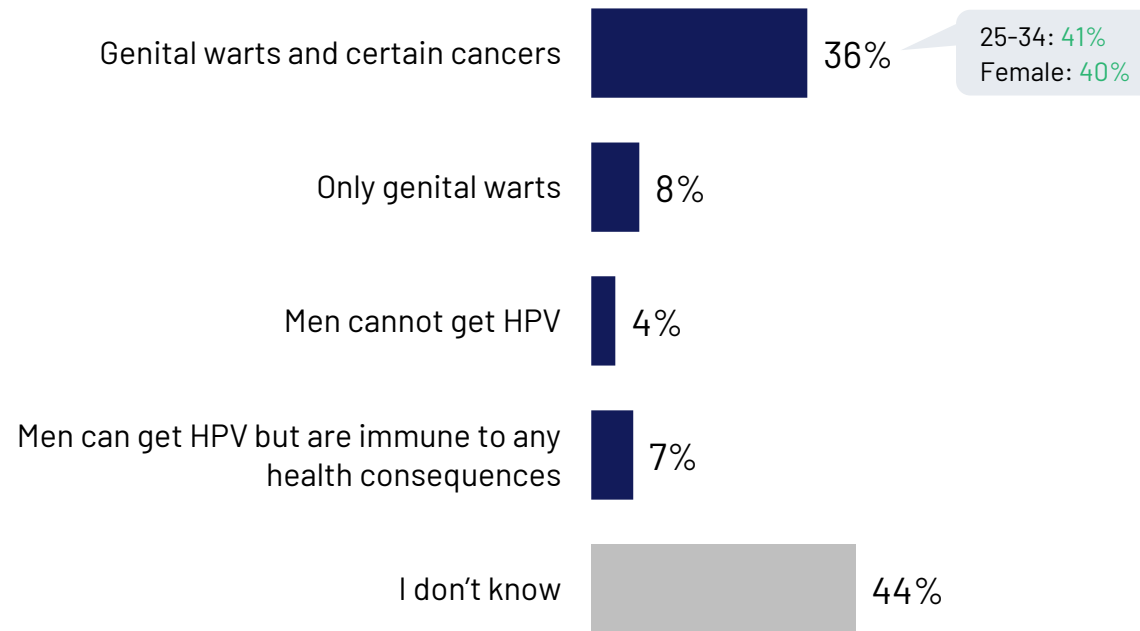
Q4. To what extent do you feel informed about how HPV can affect women's health?

Q5. Which of the following screening methods to help detect cervical cancer are you aware of? Please select all that apply.

Base: All respondents (n=1000)

Awareness of HPV's Impact on Men

More than a third of respondents reported being aware that HPV could cause genital warts and certain cancers among men. Women were more inclined to be aware of this health consequence, so did the 25-34 age group. A little over 4 out of 10 were unaware of the consequences of a persistent HPV infection in men.



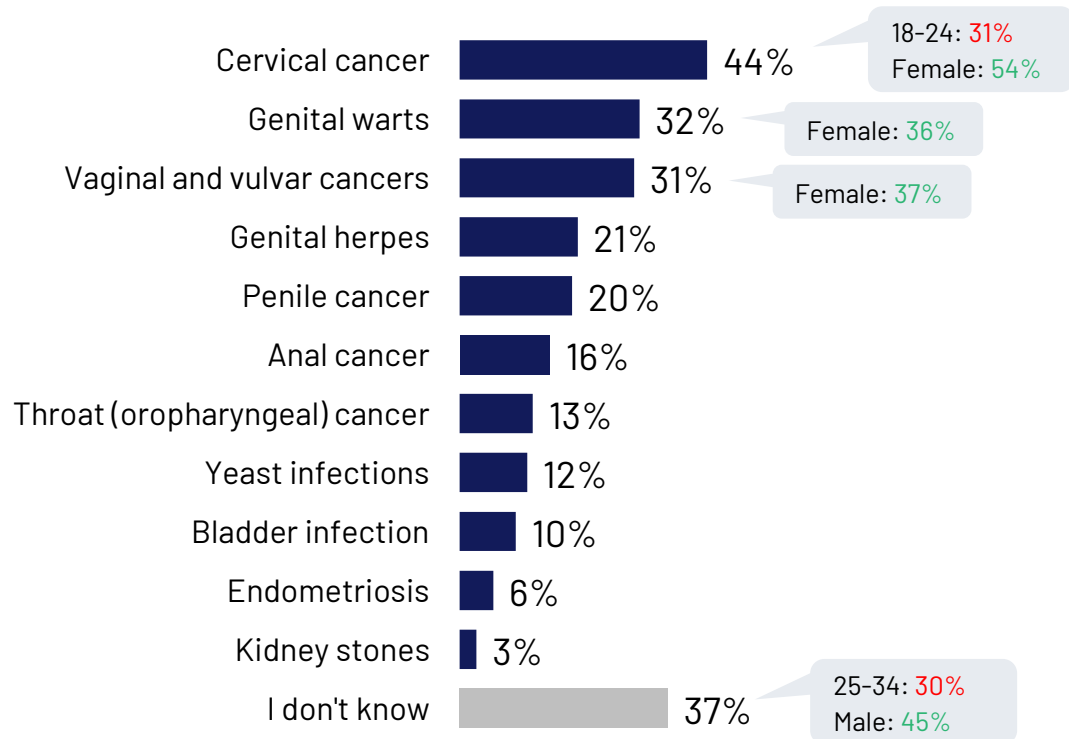
Q6. Which of the following health consequences can a persistent HPV infection cause in men?

Base: All respondents (n=1000)

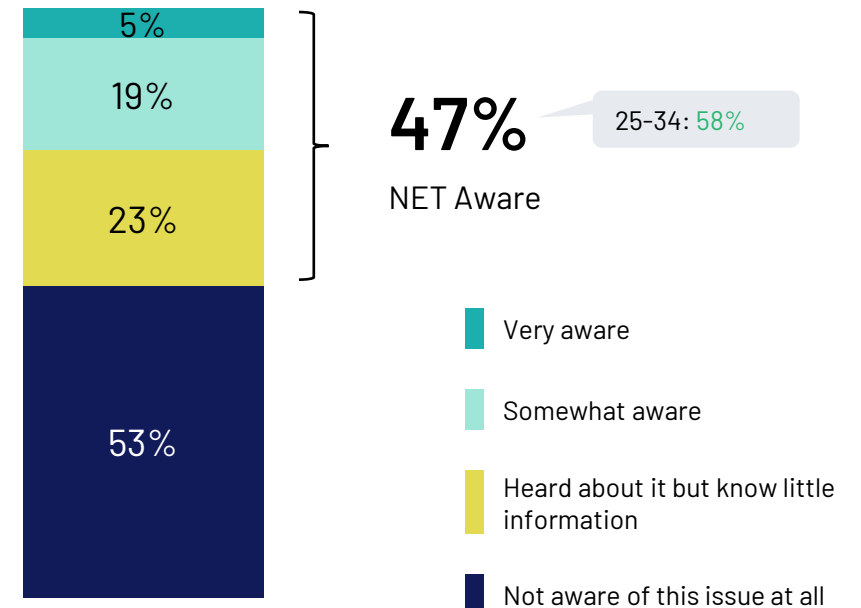
Awareness of Consequences and Rising Cancer Incidences

Cervical cancer was the most recognized consequence of HPV among respondents, followed by genital warts and vaginal and vulvar cancers. Men were generally less informed about the effects of a persistent HPV infection, and younger individuals were less likely to recognize the link to cervical cancer. Nearly half of respondents were aware of the increasing incidence of certain HPV-related head and neck cancers among men, which was even higher among 25 to 34 years old.

Awareness of Consequences of HPV on Men and Women



Awareness of Increasing Incidence of HPV-Related Head and Neck Cancers Among Men



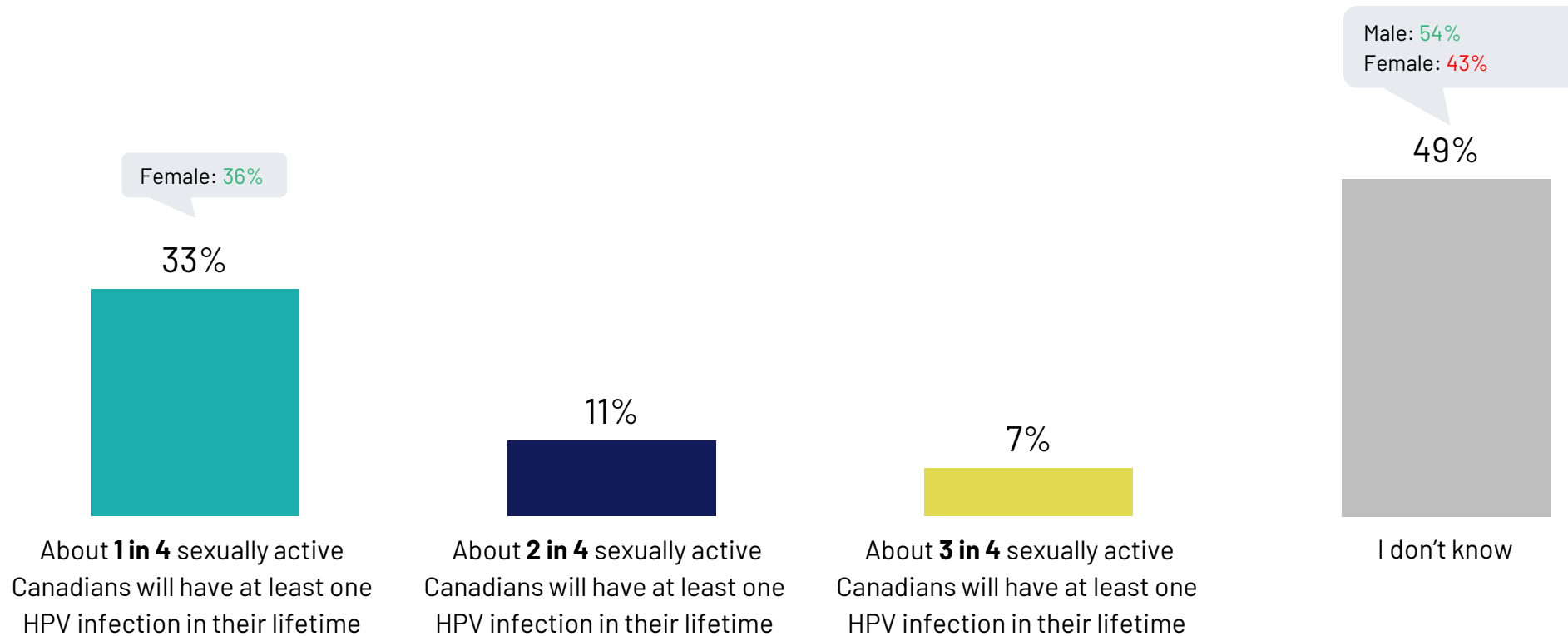
Q7. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following can result from a persistent HPV (human papillomavirus) infection in men or women?

Q8. How aware are you of the increasing incidence of certain HPV-related head and neck cancers, such as throat (oropharyngeal) cancer, especially among men?

Base: All respondents (n=1000)

Perceptions of HPV Prevalence

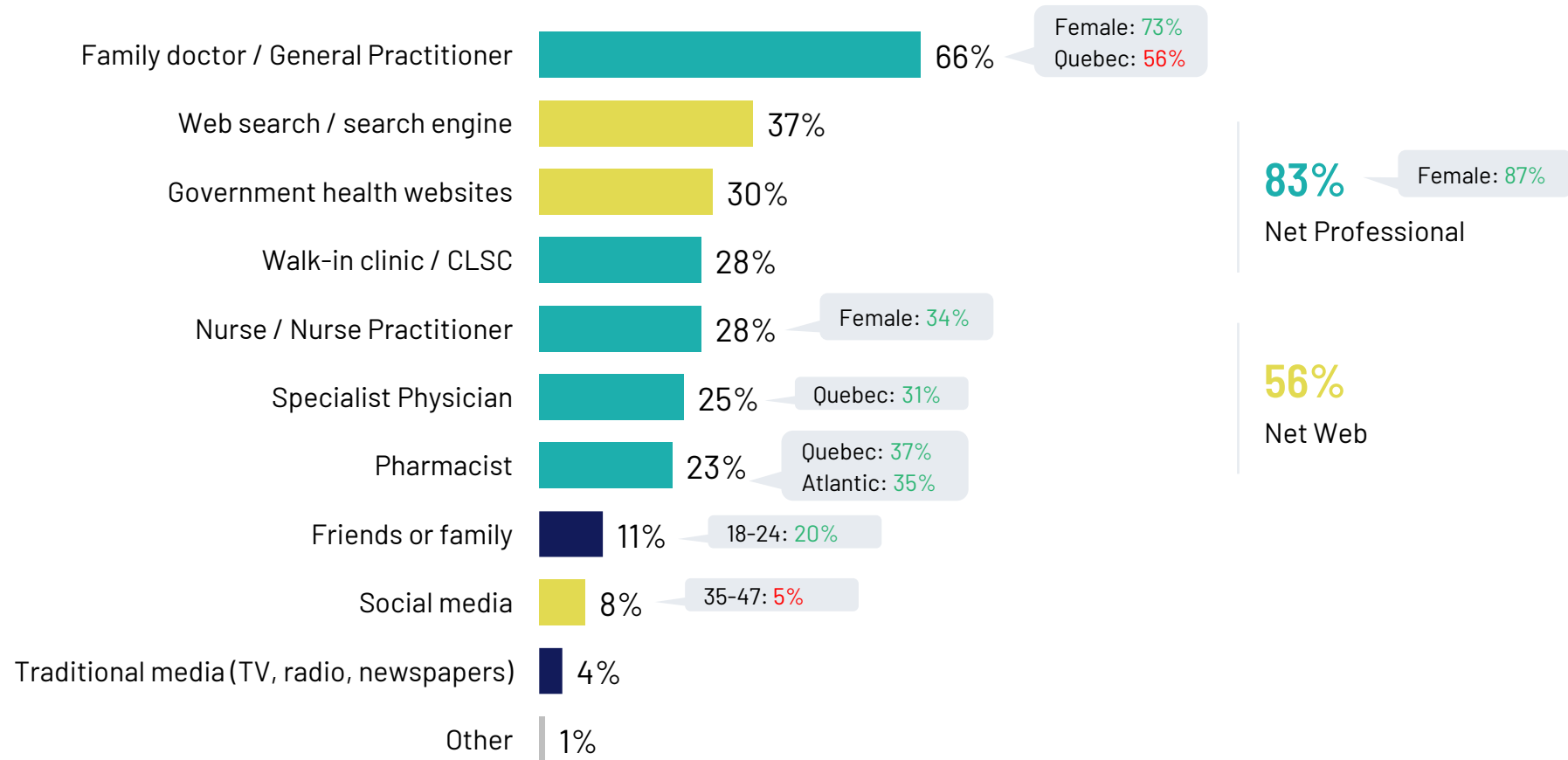
Half of the respondents were unaware of how common HPV is. A third of respondents believed that about 1 in 4 sexually active Canadians would have at least one HPV infection in their lifetime, which was higher among women versus men.



Q9. To the best of your knowledge, how common is HPV (human papillomavirus)
Base: All respondents (n=1000)

Preferred Sources for HPV Information

When it comes to seeking information about HPV, most respondents would refer to a professional. A family doctor or general practitioner was the most preferred source, especially among women. In Quebec, residents were more inclined to consult with a specialist physician or a pharmacist.



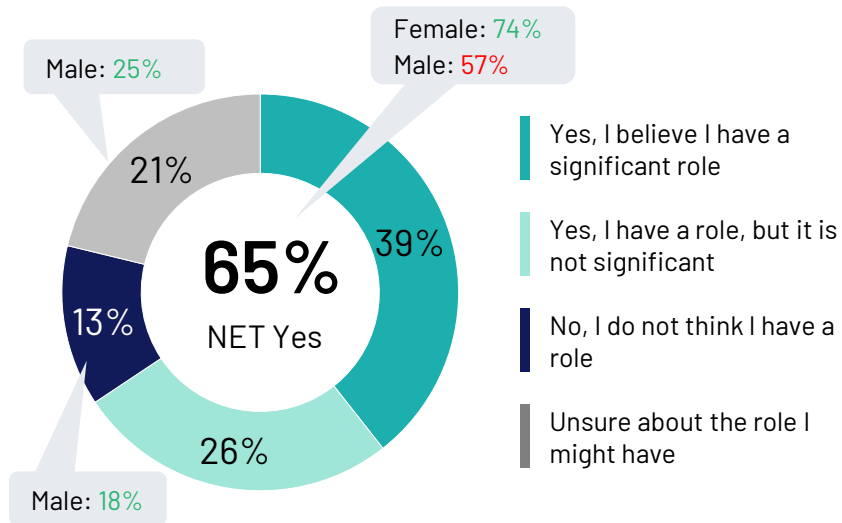
Q10. Where or whom would you go to if you have any questions about HPV (human papillomavirus)? Please select all that apply.

Base: All respondents (n=1000)

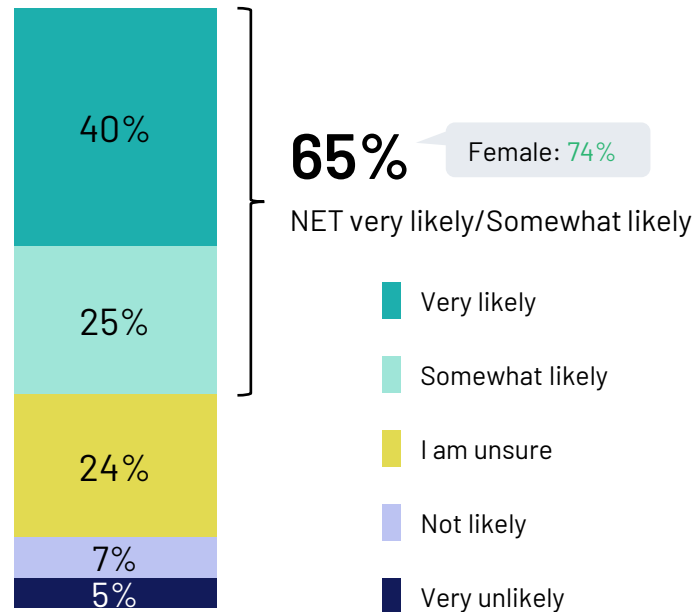
Engagement in HPV Risk Reduction

Almost two-thirds of respondents felt they had a role in mitigating HPV risk and were likely to take action to help protect themselves against HPV, with women more likely to hold those beliefs. Most respondents were informed about measures to reduce the risk of HPV, with safe sex practices being the most recognized preventive strategy. This was followed by vaccination and the use of condoms or dental dams during sexual activities.

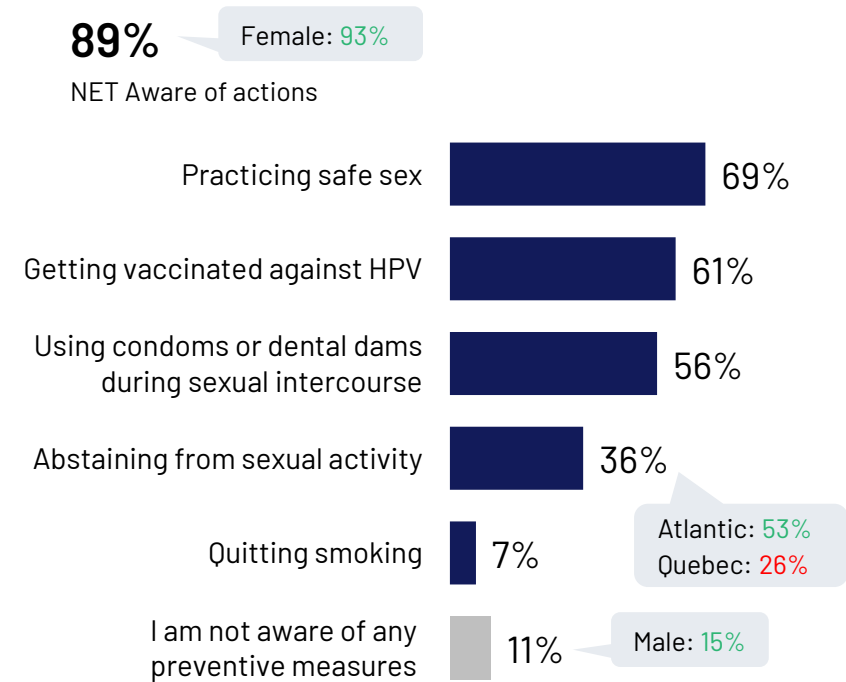
Beliefs in Reducing HPV Risk



Likelihood of Taking Preventive Measures



Awareness of Actions to Reduce Risk of HPV



Q11. Do you believe you have a role to play in helping reduce your risk of contracting or spreading an HPV (human papillomavirus) infection?

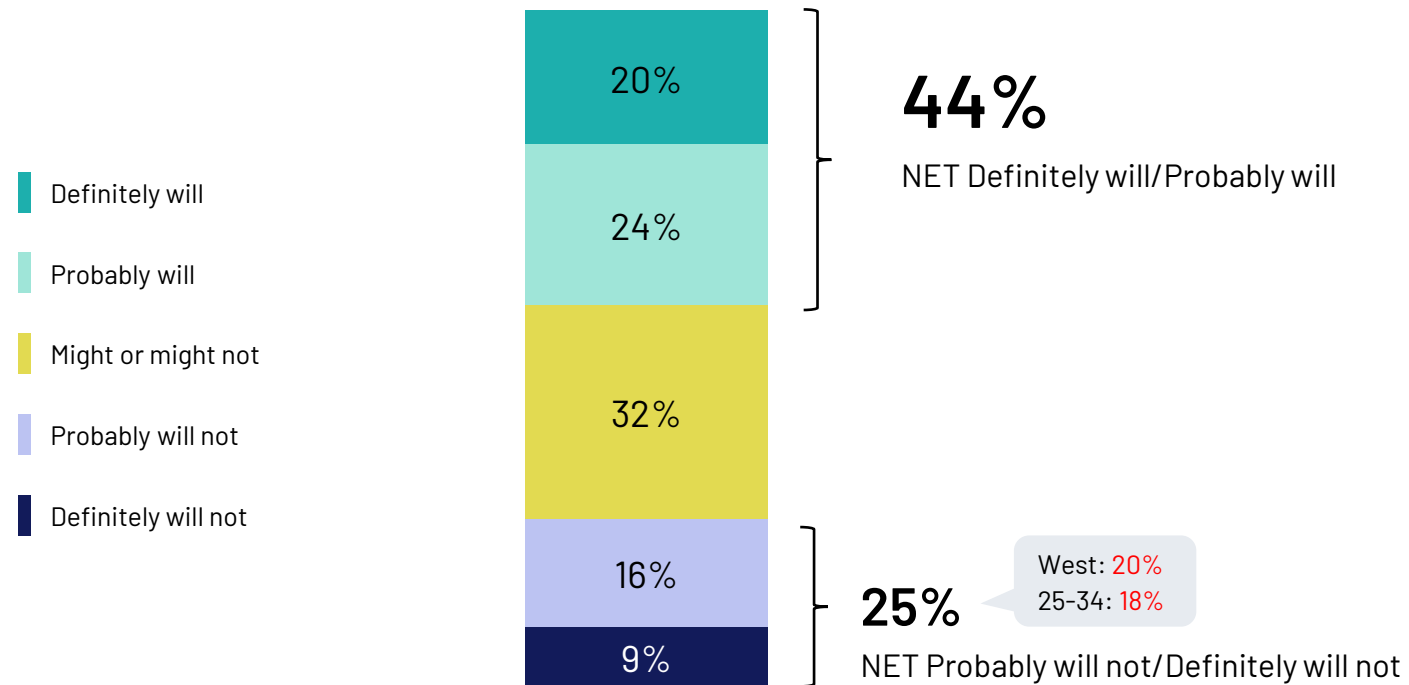
Q12. How likely are you to take action to help protect yourself against HPV (human papillomavirus)?

Q13. Which of the following actions do you know can help reduce your risk of HPV (human papillomavirus) infection? Please select all that apply.

Base: All respondents (n=1000)

Willingness to Discuss HPV with Partner, Family or Friends

About 4 out of 10 respondents were likely to discuss HPV with their partner, family or friends.



Q14. How likely are you to discuss with your partner, family or friends about HPV (human papillomavirus) and how it could potentially affect your health? You...

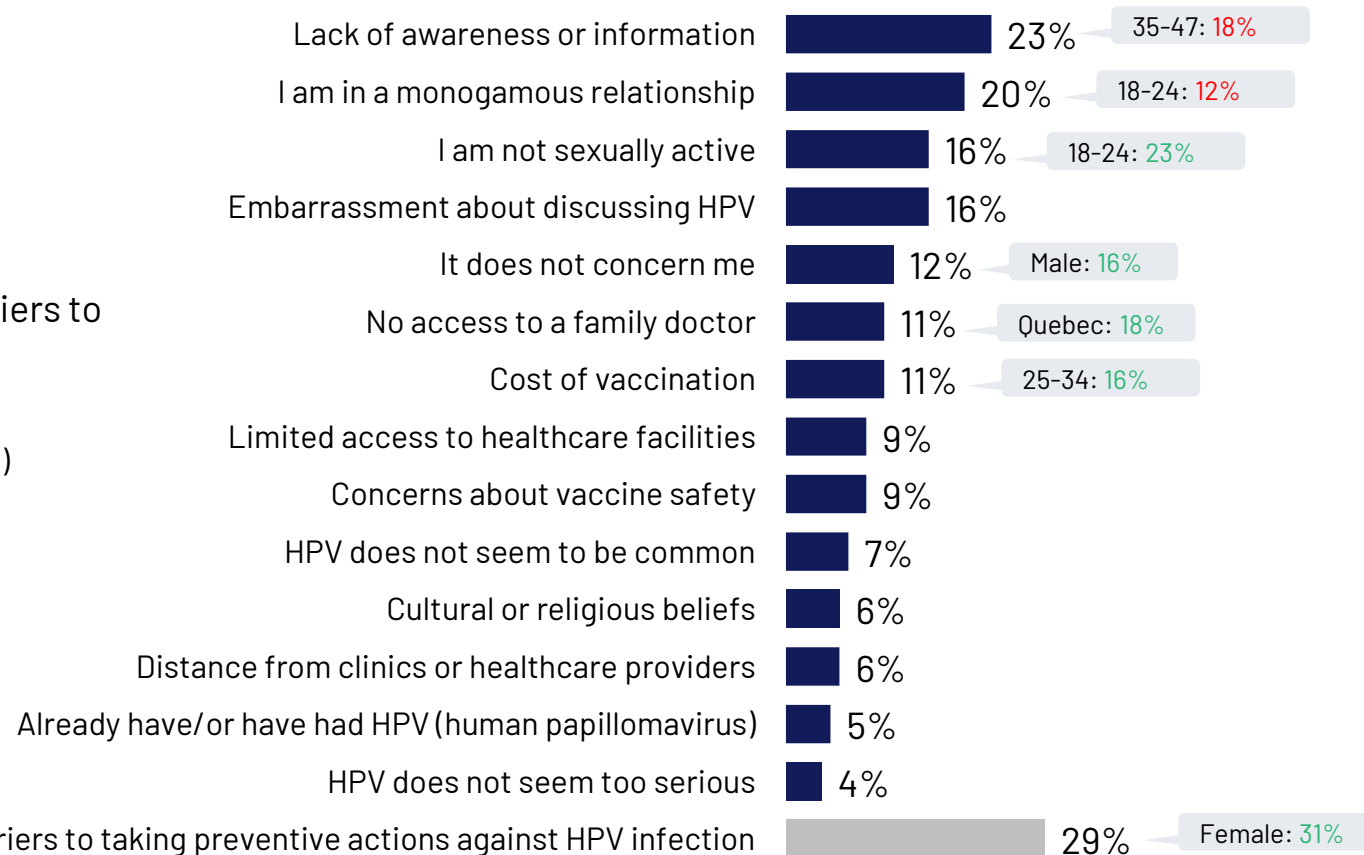
Base: All respondents (n=1000)

Barriers to Discussing HPV Prevention with Healthcare Professionals

Many respondents perceived barriers to discussing HPV with their healthcare professional, the main ones being a lack of awareness or information, and the fact that they were in a monogamous relationship.

71%

Perceive one or more barriers to discussing HPV with their healthcare professional
(Average number of barriers: 2)



Q15. What do you consider to be barriers to discussing HPV (Human Papillomavirus) and HPV prevention with your healthcare professional? Please select all that apply.

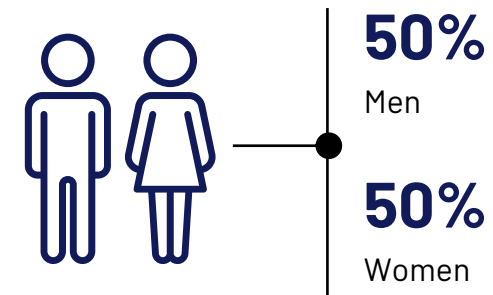
Base: All respondents (n=1000)

DEMOGRAPHICS

03

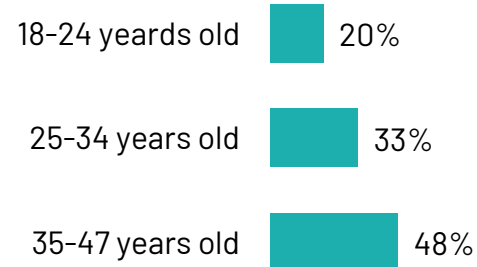
Respondents Profile

Gender

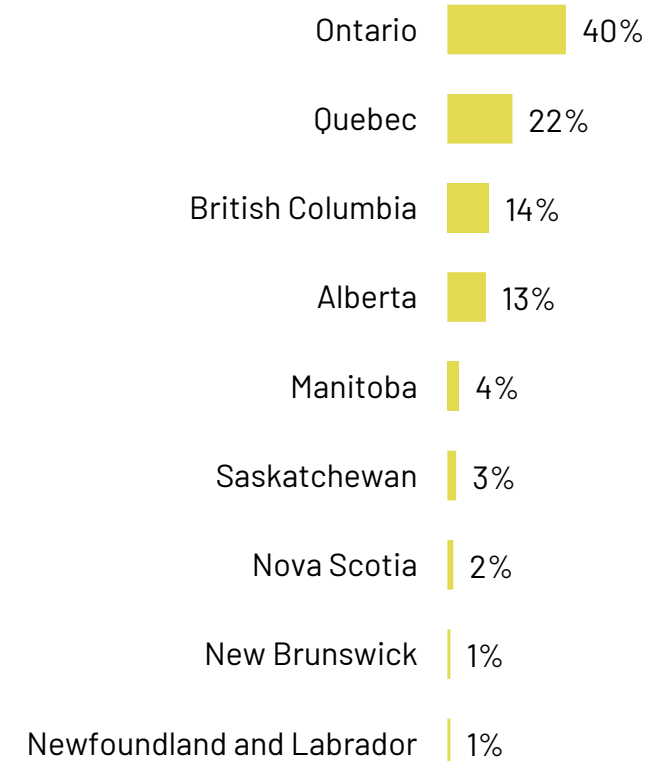


Another gender : 0%

Age



Region



Base: All respondents (n=1000)