

Women and Gender-Diverse People, HIV, HPV & ANAL CANCER

While many women and gender-diverse people don't worry about anal cancer, this is an important consideration, especially for those living with HIV. More cases of anal cancer are diagnosed amongst women than among men. HIV and Human Papillomavirus (HPV) are risk factors for anal cancer.

This document was prepared in collaboration with Dr. Ann Burchell, St. Michael's Hospital.

WHAT IS HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS (HPV)?

- HPV is a virus that is mostly transmitted through sexual activity.
- There are about 40 different types of HPV that infect the lining of the genital and anus.
- There are often no signs or symptoms.
- Some types have no health impact; while some can cause warts (called "low risk" HPV types) and others can cause cancer (called "oncogenic" or "high risk" types) over many years.

WHAT TYPES OF CANCER CAN HPV CAUSE?

- Cervical, vaginal, vulvar, or front hole cancer
- Penis cancer
- Mouth and throat cancer
- Anal cancer

WHAT ARE RISK FACTORS FOR ANAL CANCER AND ANAL HPV INFECTIONS?



Receptive anal sex is one way – but not the only way!



Having an HPV infection in the cervix, vagina, vulva, or front hole, which is common for anyone who has ever had vaginal sex



Weakened immune system, including living with HIV



A history of cervical, vaginal, vulvar, or front hole cancer



Tobacco smoking

HOW DO I PREVENT HPV-RELATED ANAL CANCER?

Screening is one way to prevent anal cancer by detecting it early on. Pap smears are an effective tool to screen for cervical HPV, but it is also important to screen for anal cancer.

Ask a health care provider about anal cancer screening. For various reasons, women are less likely to have anal cancer screening, including that they are offered it less often. It is important to screen at age:

- 45** for cis women living with HIV
- 35** for Trans women living with HIV
- 45** for Trans women not living with HIV

For those with a history of vulvar precancer or cancer: within 1 year of diagnosis.

WHAT CAN I DO TO SPREAD THE WORD?

Share information with other women and gender diverse people about HPV, HIV and anal cancer.

Share information with other service providers so they can integrate anal cancer education into their work.

Talk to your healthcare provider about anal cancer screening and share resources if they are unfamiliar with screening guidelines and practices.

KEY MESSAGES

- Sexual health includes butt health!
- Anal cancer and HPV prevention are an important part of sexual health.
- Talk to a health care provider about anal cancer screening!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANAL CANCER SCREENING

[International Anal Cancer Guidelines](#)
[International Anal Neoplasia Society – Anal Cancer Prevention Screening Toolkit](#)

MORE INFORMATION

[Types of Anal Cancer | Canadian Cancer Society](#)
[Canadian Statistics | Canadian Cancer Society](#)
[Worldwide Statistics | Global Cancer Observatory](#)

For Canadian information and patient-run support, see analcancer-abumrap.com

LOCAL RESOURCES