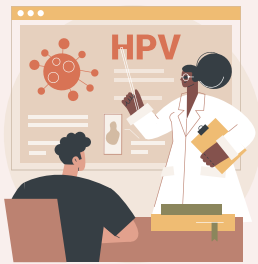


Fast Facts about Head and Neck Cancer



HPV is a significant cause of head and neck cancer

HPV, or human papillomavirus, can cause cancers of the mouth, tongue, and throat. These cancers are sometimes called head and neck cancer or oropharyngeal cancer. HPV is thought to cause 60-70% of oropharyngeal cancer in the U.S.

HPV is very contagious and very common. It is so common that experts say nearly all sexually active people will contract it at some point in their lives. Many people are exposed to oral HPV in their life, usually through oral sex. About 10% of men and 3.6% of women have oral HPV.

HPV-Related Head and Neck Cancer is More Common in Men



There are about five times as many cases of HPV-related oropharyngeal cancer in men compared to women. In fact, most people with HPV-related head and neck cancers are men in their 50s or 60s, as cancer often appears many years after HPV infection.

There Aren't Screening Tests Yet

Unfortunately, we don't have any specific screening tests for HPV-related oropharyngeal cancers. Dentists do look in your mouth for signs of HPV and other infections during your check-ups and cleanings. It's important to stay up to date on those, and to get regular medical check-ups as well.



HPV Infection Can Be Prevented with Vaccination

The good news is, there is a vaccine that is highly effective at preventing HPV infection. The HPV vaccine protects against many types of HPV, including HPV 16—about 90% of oropharynx cancers are related to this type.

The vaccine is recommended for everyone at age ages 11-12, but vaccination can start as early as age 9. It's recommended for everyone up to age 26. Between ages 9 and 14 only need two doses are needed. For older teens and adults who start the series later, starting at age 15, three doses are required.

The vaccine is also approved for people ages 27-45. Ideally, people should be vaccinated before they become sexually active, but adults over 27 now have the option of receiving the vaccine and should talk to their health care provider to make the decision about vaccination.



Learn more about HPV and HPV-related cancer at www.ashasexualhealth.org