

# HPV: Prevention, Testing and Cancer



## What is HPV?

HPV is short for **human papilloma virus**. There are over 100 strains of HPV. HPV-16 and 18 are the types most likely to cause anal cancer. HPV-6 and HPV-11 can also cause anal or genital warts. Millions of people get some type of HPV every year. In most cases, the person's immune system fights off the infection. People with suppressed immune systems, like those with HIV, are at the highest risk of not fighting off the infection.

## Risk Factors for Anal Cancer

- HPV infection, especially HPV-16.
- Receiving anal intercourse.
- History of many sexual partners.
- Anal warts. Warts themselves don't turn into cancer, but people with anal warts are more likely to develop anal cancer because they are more likely to have HPV infections.
- History of cervical, vaginal, or vulvar cancer.
- A weakened immune system (immunosuppression). Especially if you have HIV (the human immunodeficiency virus) or are taking medication to suppress your immune system (such as after an organ transplant).
- Smoking.

## Who Should Be Screened?

- Men who have sex with men.
- Women with a history of cervical or vulvar cancer.
- HIV-positive person
- Anyone who had an organ transplant.
- Anyone with a history of anal warts.
- Women who are 45 years and older who are HPV-16 positive.

## What is AIN ?

AIN (Anal Intraepithelial Neoplasia) refers to abnormal cell changes in the lining of the anus caused by HPV infection. These changes are not cancer, but they can develop into anal cancer if left untreated.

AIN is graded based on severity:

- **AIN 1 (Low-grade)**: Mild changes, often go away on their own
- **AIN 2-3 (High-grade)**: More significant changes, higher risk of becoming cancer

## Anal Cancer Screening

Anal cancer screening aims to find precancerous changes (AIN) early before they become cancer. This may include:

### 1. Anal Pap Test

- Similar to a cervical Pap test
- Collects cells from the anus to check for abnormal changes

### 2. High-Resolution Anoscopy (HRA)

- Done if abnormal cells are found
- Allows for a close look at the anal canal and biopsies if needed

Learn more about HPV and cancers: [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) (American Cancer Society)