

Protect your health!

What is the human papillomavirus virus (HPV)?

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted disease (STD) worldwide. It can cause genital warts and cancer in both men and women. In women, this infection is associated with the development of cervical, vaginal, vulvar, anal and oral cancer. HPV-associated cancers are more common in women than in men.

How is HPV transmitted?

It is transmitted by skin to skin contact, most often through vaginal and anal sex. It can also be transmitted by oral sex. Because HPV usually does not produce signs or symptoms, most people can acquire and transmit the virus without knowing it.

How can I prevent HPV? VACCINATE!

There are two vaccines to prevent infection with certain types of HPV, these are: Gardasil® and Cervarix®.

- Gardasil® is recommended for women and men from 11 to 26 years of age. It protects against the subtypes that cause cervical cancer, genital warts, anal, vulvar and vaginal cancer.
- Cervarix® is recommended for women aged 11 to 25 years of age. It protects against the subtypes of the virus that cause cervical, vulvar and vaginal cancer in women.

How are HPV and anal cancer related?

Anal infection with HPV may cause abnormal growth in the anal cells. This growth is not cancer but in some people it can become cancer.

What is anal cancer?

Anal cancer is a rare cancer that affects the tissues surrounding the opening of the anus.

What are the symptoms of anal cancer?

Many times this type of cancer does not present symptoms. In those cases that have symptoms, the most common include pain, pressure or itching in the area of anus, as well as redness, inflammation and frequent anal discomfort. Persons can also present a mass near the anus, experience anal discharge or bleeding and changes in their bowel habits.

Which are the risk factors for anal cancer?

- Being sexually active
- Being infected with HPV
- Having anal sex
- Having or having had multiple sexual partners
- Being a smoker
- Having a weak immune system, as for example being HIV positive
- Being 50 years or older
- Having had certain types of cancer (cervix, vaginal, vulvar)

Did you know that statistics indicate that...

- being infected with HIV is a risk factor for infection with HPV.
- 90% of anal cancers are attributed to HPV infection.
- anal cancer is more common in women than in men.

How can I prevent anal cancer?

- Get vaccinated against HPV.
- Protect yourself against HIV. HIV suppresses the immune system of the human being, in this way it can facilitate infection by various viruses such as HPV.
- Reduce the number of sexual partners.
- Use condoms when having sex, however, the use of the condom does not protect completely against HPV infections.
- Do not smoke.

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How can I find out if I have anal cancer?

- ✓ Through the digital rectal exam, the doctor feels the inside of the rectum to detect anomalies. It is recommended for sexually active women to have annual pelvic exams that include rectal examinations.
- ✓ Another test is the anal pap. The anal pap is an early detection test, very similar to the cervical pap. This test is important because sometimes these lesions may not be palpable in the rectal digital examination.

An abnormal finding on the early detection tests must be subjected to a more comprehensive exam that includes a biopsy, to be able to rule out the presence of anal cancer.

Early detections tests for Anal Cancer

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787-679-4330/787-758-7910

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

www.cdc.gov/spanish/inmunizacion/index.html
www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/
www.cdc.gov/hpv/

Puerto Rico Department of Health

www.salud.gov.pr/Programas/ProgramaVacunacion/Pages/Vacunacionparaadolescentesyadultos.aspx



**Puerto Rico
Primary Care Association**
787-758-3411

National Cancer Institute
www.cancer.gov/espanol

**Coalición para el Control de
Cáncer de Puerto Rico**
www.coalicioncontroldecancer.org

**Coalición de Vacunación de PR
VOCES**
www.vocespr.org



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HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS AND ANAL CANCER