

Anal Cancer: Everything You Need to Know

Prevention, Treatment & More

What is Anal Cancer?

Anal cancer develops in the tissues of the anus and is almost always caused by human papillomavirus (HPV)—the same virus linked to cervical cancer and some anal/genital warts.

Am I at Risk?

While anal cancer is generally uncommon, certain groups are at much higher risk.

You may be at higher risk if you:

- ★ Are living with HIV
- ★ Are a gay or bisexual man
- ★ Are a transgender woman/transfeminine person
- ★ Have a history of cervical, vulvar, vaginal, or penile cancer or precancer
- ★ Are an organ transplant recipient or take medicines that suppress your immune system
- ★ Have a history of genital or anal warts, or HPV infection

You do NOT need to have a history of anal sex to be at risk! HPV can spread through any intimate skin-to-skin contact.

Good news: a major clinical study showed that finding and treating precancerous signs of anal cancers reduced the risk of developing anal cancer by 57%!

How Can I Help Prevent Anal Cancer?

- ★ Get the HPV vaccine (ask your provider if you're eligible for the HPV vaccine and discuss if it's right for you).
- ★ Don't smoke—smoking increases risk and makes precancer harder to treat.
- ★ Know the symptoms—if you have bleeding, itching, pain, or a lump near the anus, tell your provider right away.

Anal cancer is preventable and treatable when caught early!

How do I get Screened?

Your primary care provider (PCP) can perform an in-office screening using a simple swab collecting cells from the anal area.

What if Something Abnormal is Found?

Precancerous cells can be treated in the office with topical treatment, ablation (a medical treatment that removes bodily tissue using heat), or minor surgical removal.

When Should I Start Screening?

If you are living with HIV:

- ★ Gay or bisexual men and transgender women/transfeminine people should start screening at age 35; all other people living with HIV should start at age 45.

If you are HIV negative:

- ★ Gay or bisexual men and transgender women/transfeminine people should talk to their provider about screening around age 45–50.
- ★ People with a history of vulvar, vaginal, or cervical cancer/precancer, as well as organ transplant recipients or immunosuppressed individuals, should ask their provider about screening.



Questions? Amida Care is here to help.

Just call our Member Services

at 1-800-556-0689, TTY 711.

We're always happy to assist you.

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