

Can I get cancer from oral sex?

Yes, and the U.S. is seeing a sharp increase in the number of cases of oral and throat cancer especially among young men, caused by HPV infections contracted during oral sex.

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REPORT ON HEALTH

The Rising Risk: HPV now a more-common cause of throat and oral cancers than tobacco

Changing sexual behavior may explain why over the last decade HPV infections have led to a four- to five-fold increase in the number of tonsillar and base of tongue cancers, particularly among young men.

Survival rates for mouth and oral cancers are between 85%-90%, but oral cancers alone still kill 8,000 people in the U.S. every year.

In 2010, the National Cancer Institute estimated there were 12,960 cases of oropharyngeal cancer resulting in 2,410 deaths. About half of those cases were men and at least 75% were caused by HPV.



HPV is a virus. It is the most common sexually transmitted infection, and can be spread through skin-to-skin contact.

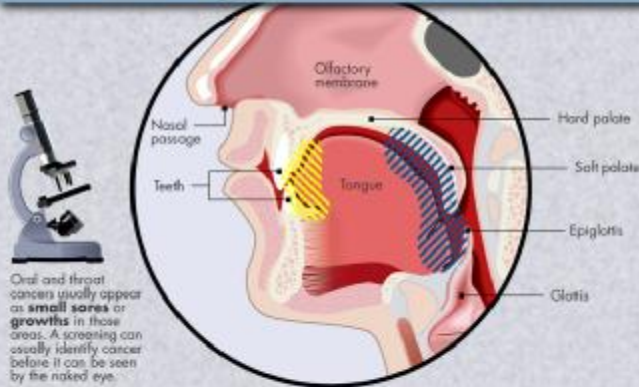


Approved vaccines can help prevent an HPV infection.

What do HPV throat and oral cancers look like?

HPV primarily causes cancer in the back regions of the mouth—around the base of the tongue, the back of the throat, the tonsils and the tonsillar pillars.

Non-HPV-positive cancers tend to involve the front tongue, floor of the mouth, the inside of the cheeks and the ridge area around the teeth.



Oral and throat cancers usually appear as small sores or growths in those areas. A screening can usually identify cancer before it can be seen by the naked eye.

How likely am I to get cancer caused by HPV?

General oral cancers are about **2 times more common in men** than women.



But HPV-related cancers are **6-7 times more common in men** than women.



What are some risk factors of contracting HPV?

Those with 6 or more oral sex partners are **8.6 times more likely** than those who have never had oral sex.



Those with 1 to 5 oral sex partners are **2 times more likely** than those who have never had oral sex



Smokers are **3 times more likely** than those who have never had oral sex



HPV-positive throat cancer has also been reported in individuals who report **few or no sexual partners.**



Tobacco and alcohol use can increase your risk of developing mouth or throat cancer if you already have HPV.

**What are the symptoms of oral and throat cancer?
How can I lower my chances of getting HPV-related cancers?**

SYMPTOMS

- ▶ Hoarseness
- ▶ Consistent sore throat
- ▶ Pain when swallowing or difficulty swallowing
- ▶ Pain when chewing
- ▶ A lump in the neck
- ▶ Non-healing mouth sores

PREVENTION TIPS

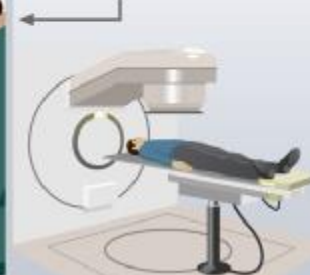
- ▶ Get the HPV vaccine if you are within the age limit
- ▶ Reduce your intake of tobacco and alcohol
- ▶ Limit your number of sexual partners, and the number your partner has
- ▶ Get screened if you have any of the symptoms of oral or throat cancer

There is currently no way to screen for oral HPV.

If you do get HPV-related oral or throat cancer, there are treatment options



If you do get HPV-related oral or throat cancer, there are treatment options including **surgery**. Select facilities throughout the country are using new, minimally invasive robotics, which reduce scarring and side effects.



Other treatments include **radiation therapy** and/or **chemotherapy**.



As with any treatment plan, **early detection is key.**

If you have any of the symptoms of throat or oral cancer, use tobacco and alcohol regularly, and have five or more sexual partners, **talk to your doctor.**



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