

PRACTITIONER HPV FACT SHEET

What is HPV?

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) family is a group of viruses with strains that can be divided into low and high-risk types.

LOW-RISK HPV TYPE

Commonly cause warts or papillomas in the mouth, throat or genitals.



HIGH-RISK HPV TYPE

Can cause cancers of the oropharynx (throat) and anogenital regions (anus, cervix, vagina, vulva in women; anus and penis in men).



How is HPV transmitted?

HPV is passed by direct contact with infected skin or mucus membranes during oral, anal, or vaginal sex with someone who has the virus and may even be passed through open mouth kissing.

WHO IS AT RISK FOR HPV-RELATED OROPHARYNGEAL CANCER (OPC)?



- HPV-related OPC is more common in men (4:1 male to female ratio)
- Typical presentation is in the early to mid 50s
- High risk groups include those with early sexual debut, a large number of lifetime oral sex partners and partners of individuals who that have a known HPV-related cancer
- While **marijuana may increase risk** of developing these HPV-related OPC, many patients lack a tobacco smoking history

Is HPV common?



- HPV is the most common sexually transmitted disease in America. Nearly all men and women will get some type of HPV at some point in their lives.
- In most cases, the virus is cleared by the body's immune system.
- When the virus is not cleared (**1-2% of cases**), the persistence of the virus can put people at risk for the development of papillomas (low-risk HPV) or cancer (high-risk HPV).

What is OPC?



- HPV-related OPC is the most common HPV-related cancer in the United States, recently surpassing cervical cancer.
- HPV-related OPCs most commonly arise in base of tongue and tonsillar region of the throat.
- Cancer in the other regions of the oropharynx (soft palate, uvula, and walls of the throat) commonly are caused by non-HPV-related factors, such as tobacco and alcohol.