

Anal cancer screening: an essential health benefit

Cancer screening is done to find cancer as early as possible in people who don't yet have any signs of the disease.

Anal cytology, sometimes called an anal pap test, is a test doctors can use to screen people who may be at risk for developing anal cancer from contracting a very common sexually transmitted virus, HPV.

During this test, a health care provider swabs the anal lining for a sample. Those cells are then examined in a lab under a microscope to see if there are early cellular changes that might lead to cancer or if cancer has already developed.

Some health care providers are advocating the routine use of this test for people who have a higher risk of developing anal cancer.¹

A health equity issue: Although rates of anal cancer are increasing across multiple demographic groups, the burden of this disease rests disproportionately with people living with HIV, men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender women and cis-women with a history of other genital cancers (vulvar, vaginal or cervical cancer).² MSM with HIV are 80 times more likely to get anal cancer than the general population.³

<u>AN EQUITY COMPARISON</u> ⁴	<u>Cervical Cancer</u>	<u>Anal Cancer</u>
Caused by Human papillomavirus (HPV)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Can be detected by screening/pap test	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Early detection can prevent death	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Testing covered by marketplace insurance as an "essential health benefit"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Marketplace insurance covers 16 million people⁵ and should include anal pap tests as an essential health benefit.

¹ Anal Cancer - Screening. Cancer.Net. Published May 27, 2015. Accessed 06/10/23.
² Fuchs MA, Multani AG, Mayer KH, Keuroghlian AS. Anal Cancer Screening for HIV-Negative Men Who Have Sex with Men: Making Clinical Decisions with Limited Data. LGBT Health. 2021;8(5):317-321.
³ Deshmukh AA, Cantor SB, Fenwick E, et al. (2017). Adjuvant HPV vaccination for anal cancer prevention in HIV-positive men who have sex with men: The time is now. Vaccine, 35(38), 5102-5109.
⁴ Harsha E. Improving Human Papillomavirus vaccination rates in the U.S: Recommendations for health professionals and policy makers. The Fenway Institute 09/30/22. Accessed 06/10/23.
⁵ Marketplace Enrollment, 2014-2023 | KFF. Accessed 06/10/23.