

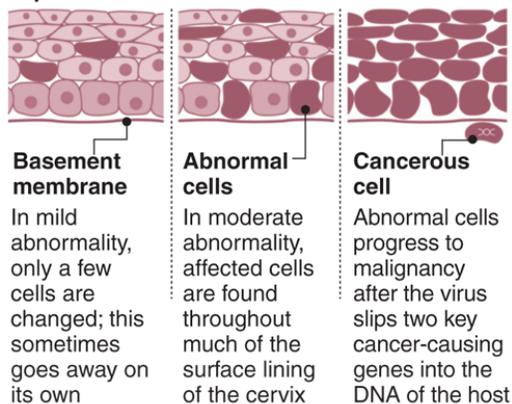
# 40% of Americans now have cancer causing HPV infection, + It's RISING

The human papillomavirus - [considered a public health threat because of its link to cancer](#) - now infects roughly 40 percent of adult Americans, according to a new report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

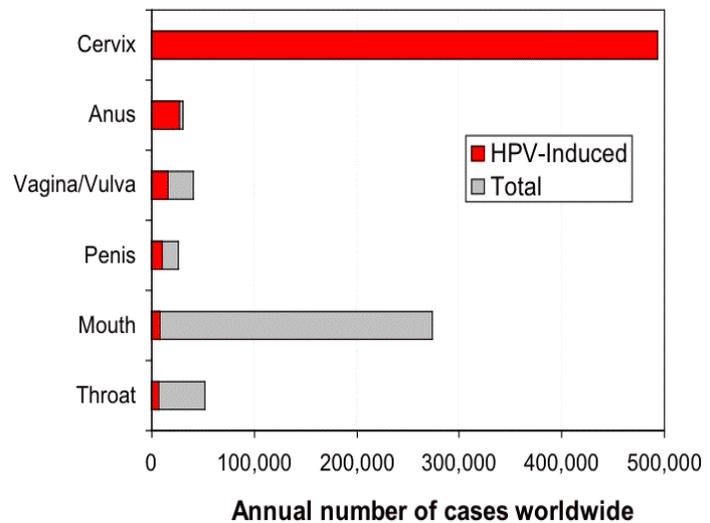
## HPV From Infection to Cancer

*"High-risk" human papillomavirus (HPV) types have the potential to lead to cancer over a decade or longer. When the virus infects cells, it gradually causes increasingly severe damage.*

### Squamous cells



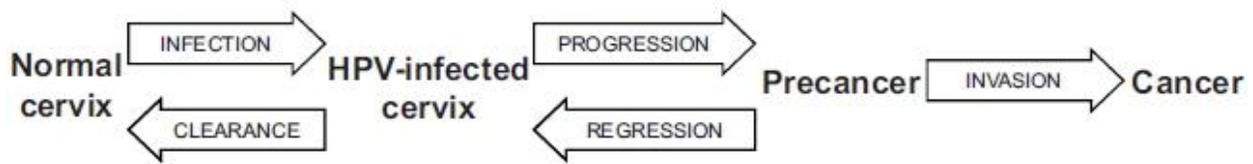
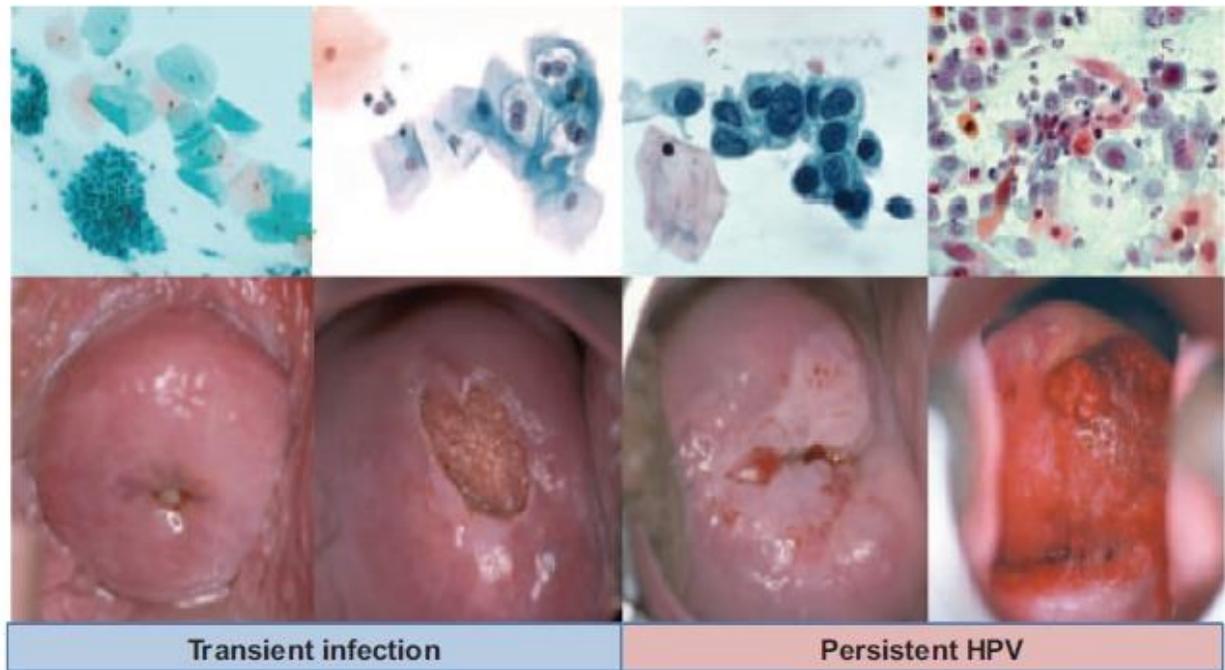
MCT Source: Dr. Richard M. Haupt, Merck & Co.



Although HPV first came to the public's attention because of its link to cervical cancer, it is [more prevalent in men than in women](#), according to a new report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

There are 37 strains of the virus, 14 of which are considered high risk because of their ability to cause cancers of the genital area and throat.

Men are more likely than women to be infected with both the low-risk and the high-risk strains of the virus.



There is a vaccine for several strains of the virus, but it is [most effective when given in early adolescence, before any sexual activity](#). While it was originally marketed as a means of protecting females from developing cervical cancer, it is now recommended for both boys and girls.

However, inoculation rates for boys continue to trail that of girls, with 63 percent of girls starting the series of shots compared to 50 percent of boys.

The latest estimates from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey for the years 2011-2014 are that among adults between the ages of 18 and 59, 45.2 percent of men and 39.9 percent of women have genital HPV.

The estimates for the strains that affect the throat are far lower, but still show men to be at greater risk: Among adults 18 to 69, 11.5 percent of men are infected, compared to 3.3 percent of women.

Since the survey did not include populations that are considered to be at higher risk - people in prison, drug users, and the homeless - the researchers say their estimates are probably low.

The most serious consequences of the virus still fall on women, according to CDC data: About 39,00 HPV-associated cancers occur in the United States each year, with about 23,000 among women, and about 16,000 among men.

Cervical cancer is the most common HPV-associated cancer among women, while cancers of the back of the throat, including the base of the tongue and tonsil, are the most common among men.



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