# Why You Should Know HPV Is Linked to Head and Neck Cancers

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Although the rate of throat cancer has increased, especially among men, many people know incredibly little about the symptoms, causes and risks of head and neck cancers, according to recent survey findings in the journal JAMA Otolaryngology and reported by Yahoo.com.

For the online questionnaire, researchers at Yale University School of Medicine asked 2,126 adults about their knowledge of head and neck cancers. Turns out, the vast majority of respondents knew almost nothing about the symptoms of the diseases. (Signs of head or neck cancers can include a sore throat, voice changes, difficulty swallowing, mouth lesions that don't heal and neck lumps.)

What's more, less than one percent of those surveyed identified HPV as a risk factor for neck or throat cancer. That's troubling, said researchers, because even though head and neck cancers overall have been on the decline, rates of the diseases associated with sexually transmitted infections (STIs) have tripled over the last two decades.

"If people are aware of the risks and the signs and symptoms, they could be diagnosed earlier," said Benjamin Judson, MD, an assistant professor of surgery at Yale and senior author of the study. What's more, if you're diagnosed earlier, you have a much better chance of survival.

HPV can be transmitted through oral sex and cause throat cancer as well as cancer of the voice box, mouth and tongue. (But smoking also causes these cancers.)

Currently, there are two vaccines that reduce the risk of HPV infection, but researchers do not yet know if they can prevent oral infections of the disease.

Remember, oral sex doesn't always equal safe sex. For more information, click here.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/hpv-linked-to-head-and-neck-cancers-25768-4245