



Improving lives through the prevention and treatment of anogenital & HPV-related diseases

PATIENT RESOURCES

High Resolution Anoscopy (HRA)

HPV (human papillomavirus, a common sexually transmitted infection) can cause anal dysplasia. If your doctor believes that you are at higher risk for developing anal dysplasia or anal cancer, he/she may recommend you have a HRA.

Why do I need an HRA?

Anal dysplasia is the development of abnormal cells (or a lesion) in the lining (skin) of the anal canal. Anal dysplasia can be mild (low-grade) or moderate to severe (high grade). These low-grade and high-grade changes in the anus may get better, stay the same, or get worse on their own with time. Sometimes, high-grade changes may become cancer. Anal dysplasia is seen inside the anal canal and in the skin surrounding the anus (the perianus).

How do I prepare for my HRA?

Some providers may ask you to do an enema, but others do not.

- Do NOT insert anything into your anus 24 hours before your HRA unless instructed by your provider.
- Consider taking ibuprofen (if you can) or acetaminophen 1-2 hours before your HRA.

What happens during my HRA appointment?

History: Your provider will ask you about how you are doing, your health habits, past illnesses, and medications.

Digital-Exam: The provider will do an exam of the anus and rectum by inserting a lubricated, gloved finger into the anus and lower part of the rectum to feel for lumps or anything that seems unusual.

Anal Pap Test/Anal Cytology: If your provider collects a Pap test, a moist swab or cotton swab will be used to collect cells from the anal canal to be observed under a microscope. This procedure checks for abnormal cells in the anus and should only last about 10 seconds. Anyone with an abnormal anal Pap test should have a HRA with possible biopsy to examine the anal canal.

HRA with possible biopsy: Your provider will insert a plastic instrument (anoscope) inside the anal canal and will look through it using a special microscope (colposcope). Some providers will apply lidocaine, a numbing gel, prior to inserting the anoscope, while others use numbing medication only if they need to take an abnormality.

If an abnormal area is seen, the provider will take a small piece of tissue (biopsy) to send to a specialist (pathologist) to check for signs of dysplasia or cancer. The exam will normally last about 15 minutes.



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How can I protect against HPV and anal dysplasia?

- Practicing safer sex—use condoms EVERY time you have sex to reduce your risk of getting HPV.
- Having fewer sexual partners will also decrease your risk of getting HPV.
- Stopping smoking cigarettes.
- Getting the HPV vaccine if you are between the ages of 9-26, to help prevent new infections of 9 HPV types that cause warts and cancer. The vaccine only protects against HPV types you have not had.

Anal dysplasia can be treated successfully, but people with HIV are at higher risk of seeing the dysplasia come back. HIV therapy does not protect against anal dysplasia and anal cancer, so it is important to see your provider for regular checkups.

What can I expect after my HRA appointment?

If you have a biopsy during your HRA, your anus will need several days to heal. To prevent infection / bleeding, for one week after your procedure:

- Avoid lifting anything more than 20 pounds.
- Avoid inserting anything into the anus (no anal sex, fingers, toys, or suppositories) until bleeding stops.

To help with mild to moderate pain or discomfort, you can take over-the-counter medicine (acetaminophen or ibuprofen).

Soaking the area in hot water, especially after bowel movements, can help to reduce pain.

Drinking more water can help prevent constipation.

A small amount of bleeding with bowel movements may happen for a few days, and rarely, infection or severe bleeding may also occur. Please call your local emergency room if you develop severe pain, heavy bleeding, or a fever of more than 101° F.





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What do my HRA test results mean?

The results of the HRA exam and biopsies will help you and your healthcare provider determine what treatment is best for you. Below are the possible results of your HRA exam:

- 1 The visual exam was normal.** No concerning areas were found. Your healthcare provider will inform you when you should have your next HRA exam.
- 2 A concerning area was found inside or around your anus.** Biopsies were taken and sent to a lab to determine whether the cells are abnormal. Lab results are categorized as:
 - a A mild abnormality, or a low grade change.** No treatment will be recommended at this time (unless you are having problems because of these changes). However, your healthcare provider will continue to monitor you to be sure that the cells do not progress to high-grade dysplasia.
 - b The results showed a moderate to severe abnormality or a high grade change.** Your provider may recommend that you receive treatment in order to prevent the abnormal cells from becoming cancer. There are many different treatments available that your healthcare provider will discuss with you.

FOR MORE INFORMATION (GENERAL)

www.cancer.gov
www.cancer.org
www.oncolink.org

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT OPEN CLINICAL TRIALS:

www.amcoperations.com
www.analcancerinfo.ucsf.edu
www.analcancerfoundation.org

ASCCP is a professional society for an interdisciplinary group of healthcare professionals including physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, midwives and researchers, who are focused on improving lives through the prevention and treatment of anogenital and HPV-related diseases. For more information visit www.asccp.org.