

HEAD & NECK CANCERS

Head and neck (H&N) cancers may occur when abnormal cell growth and division is observed in the head or neck regions (including the oral and nasal cavity, pharynx, larynx and middle ear)

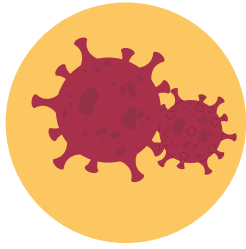
What are some of the **RISK FACTORS** for developing head and neck cancer?



Consuming **alcoholic** drinks



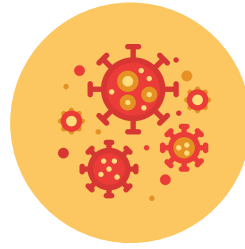
Tobacco use (includes smokeless & chewing tobacco)



HPV - Human Papilloma virus (mostly oral cavity and pharynx cancers)



Occupational exposure to dust and harmful fumes



Epstein-Barr virus (mostly nasal cavity and pharynx cancers)

Males are at higher risk and up to **three times** as likely to develop H&N cancer compared to females



Some **important things** to note about head and neck cancer



In Canada, H&N cancer is the **6th most common** cancer in **males**, and the incidence has been **increasing** at 0.6% per year since 1984



Mortality rate for H&N cancer has been stable in males and has **dropped** steadily in females at 1.3% each year since 2009

Did you know?

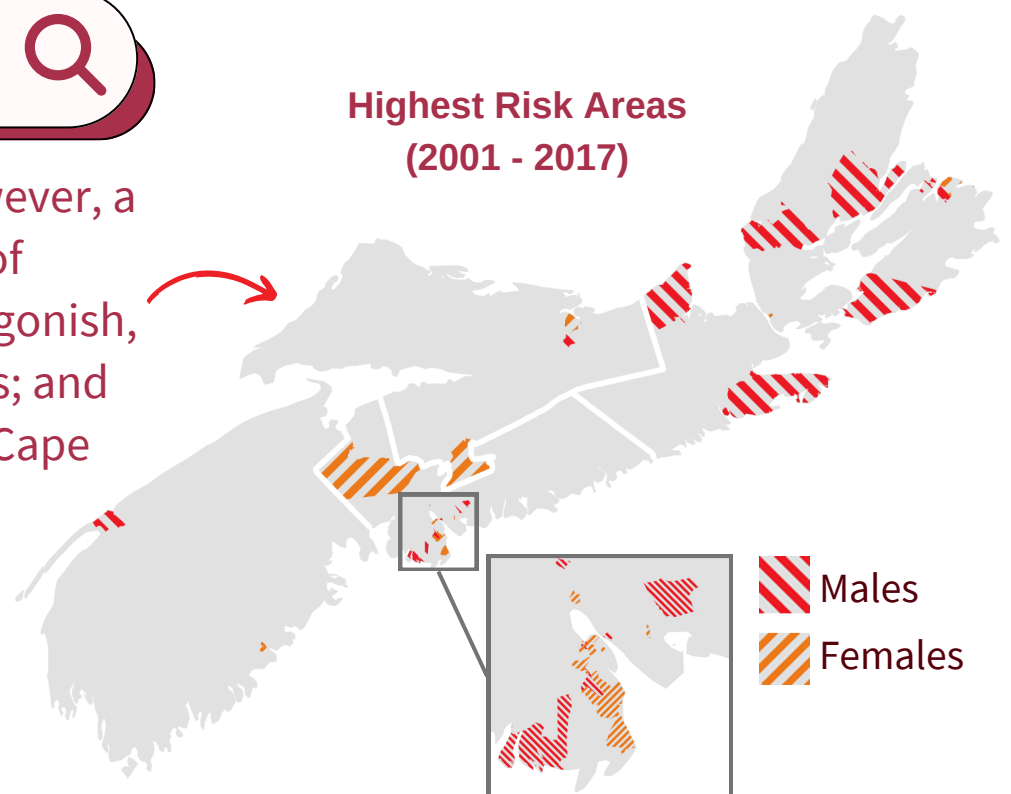
- H&N cancer is among the **top most preventable** cancers
- At least **75%** of H&N cancers are caused by tobacco and alcohol use; and the risk is greater in people who use both substances together

Head and neck cancer in **Nova Scotia**



- H&N cancer occurs throughout Nova Scotia. However, a persistently higher rate is seen in males in parts of Richmond, Inverness, Victoria, Cape Breton, Antigonish, Guysborough, Pictou, Halifax, and Digby counties; and in females in parts of Hants, Pictou, Halifax, and Cape Breton counties, over the period of 2001-2017
- About **2,200** cases of H&N cancer are expected to be diagnosed in Nova Scotia in the next 10 years. Over **72%** of the projected cases will be diagnosed in males.

Highest Risk Areas (2001 - 2017)



Red diagonal stripes: Males
Orange diagonal stripes: Females

How can you **REDUCE** your risk of head and neck cancer?



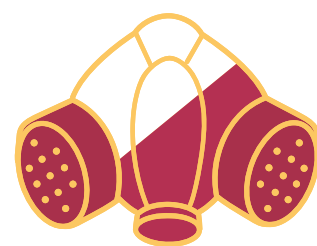
Do not use tobacco
If you do, try to stop.
Call 811 for help to quit



Avoid drinking alcohol
If you do drink, follow the Canadian guidance on alcohol and health



Vaccinate against HPV and limit exposure by avoiding unsafe oral sex



Limit exposure to **dust** and other harmful chemicals at work



Regular dental checkups can find some H&N cancers early, when they are easier to treat