

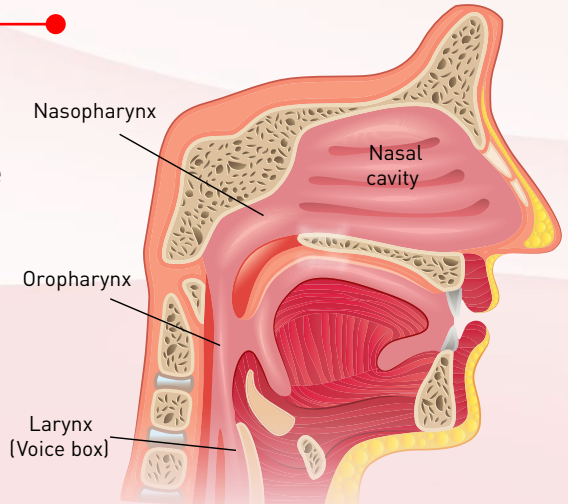


SPEECH THERAPY AND HEAD AND NECK CANCER

Introduction



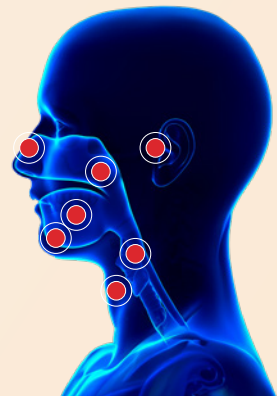
Head and neck cancer refers to cancers that develop in the tissues of the head and neck, including the mouth, throat, voice box, sinuses, and salivary glands. Some of the terms your doctor may use for diagnosis include oropharyngeal cancer, nasopharyngeal cancer and laryngeal cancer.



Head and Neck Cancer: Signs and Symptoms

If the following symptoms persist for more than two weeks, it is recommended that you seek advice from an Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeon:

- Hoarse voice
- A lump in the neck that can be felt through the skin, which is typically painless
- Ear pain
- Stuffy or blocked nose that doesn't go away
- Pain or difficulty swallowing
- A sore in the mouth that does not heal
- A sore on the skin of the face, neck or lips that does not heal
- Nosebleeds
- Coughing up blood
- Unintentional weight loss



Dysphagia (Swallowing Difficulties): Signs and Symptoms

- Coughing or choking during or after meals
- Throat clearing during or after meals
- Difficulty swallowing
- Feeling as if food is stuck in the throat, chest, or behind the breastbone
- Drooling
- Unintentional weight loss
- Shortness of breath during/ while eating



Speech and Language Therapists – What We Do

- Head and neck cancer causes both short- and long-term side effects, impacting an individual's ability to swallow, as well as their clarity of voice and speech
- Speech and Language Therapists are a crucial part of the multidisciplinary team (MDT) that works with individuals who have head and neck cancer.

What Does Speech and Language Therapy for Head and Neck Cancer Involve?

- **Initial Assessment**

A baseline evaluation of swallowing and voice or communication functions will be conducted prior to chemotherapy and radiotherapy sessions.

- **Therapy and Swallowing Management**

Ongoing treatment conducted includes exercises to improve speech, swallowing and voice functions. Some safe swallowing techniques and diet modifications may also be introduced during these sessions.

Why Is Speech and Language Therapy Important?

Research suggests that patients who undergo speech therapy during the course of their head and neck cancer treatment experience better outcomes in terms of swallowing, voice and overall quality of life.



We are now offering tailored speech therapy packages for individuals with head and neck cancer. Contact our Speech and Hearing Department to book your appointment today.

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