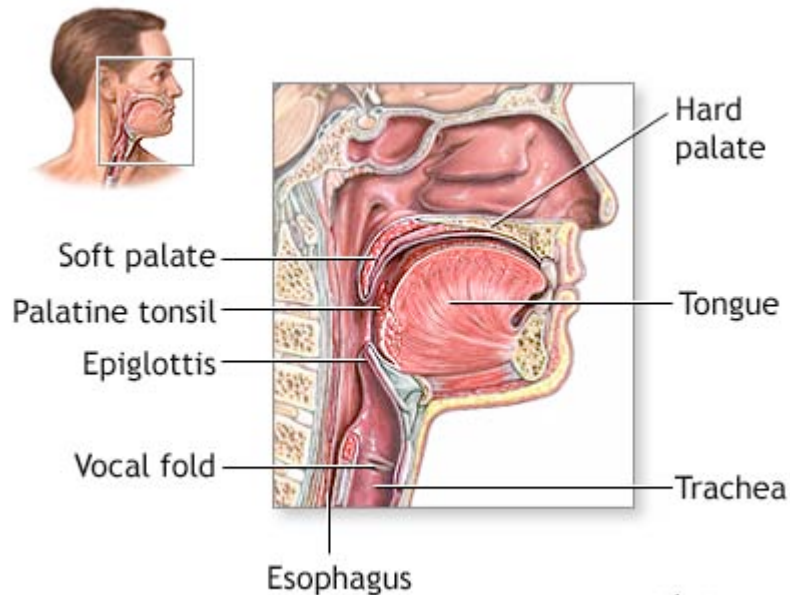


Throat cancer

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Throat anatomy



Structures of the throat include the esophagus, trachea, epiglottis and tonsils.

Alternative names

Vocal cord cancer; Throat cancer; Laryngeal cancer; Cancer of the glottis

Definition

Cancer of the throat involves malignant tumors (growths) on the vocal cords, voice box (larynx), or other areas of the throat.

Causes, incidence, and risk factors

People who smoke or otherwise use tobacco are at risk of developing tumors of the throat. Excessive alcohol use also increases risk, and smoking and alcohol use together constitute an extreme risk for the development of throat cancers.

Most cancers of the throat develop in adults older than 50, and men are 10 times more likely than women to develop throat cancers.

Symptoms

- hoarseness that does not resolve in 1 to 2 weeks

- sore throat
- neck pain
- difficulty swallowing
- swelling in the neck
- weight loss
- cough
- coughing up blood
- abnormal (high pitched) breathing sounds

Signs and tests

An examination of the neck and throat may show cancers of the throat. The sputum may appear bloody. A lump may appear on the outside of the neck. A laryngoscopy, which is examination by use of a tube with a small lighted camera (laryngoscope), allows the physician to look into the mouth and down the throat to see the tumor.

A neck or cranial CT scan or cranial MRI may show throat cancer. These tests will also help determine if the cancer has spread to lymph nodes in the neck.

Biopsy and analysis of tissues that appear abnormal may confirm the presence of a cancerous tumor.

Treatment

Treatment is aimed at destruction of the cancer and prevention of spread of the cancer to other parts of the body.

When the tumor is small, either surgery or radiation therapy alone can be used to eliminate the tumor.

When the tumor is larger or has spread to lymph nodes in the neck, combination radiation and chemotherapy is often used to preserve the voice box and is successful in most cases.

Surgical removal of the tumor, including all or part of the vocal cords (laryngectomy) may be necessary in some cases. If a laryngectomy is required, a surgical prosthesis (artificial vocal cords) may be implanted, voice aids may be used, or speech therapy may be recommended to teach alternative methods of speaking.

Many patients also need swallowing therapy after treatment to help them adjust to the changes in their throat.

Expectations (prognosis)

Throat cancers can be cured in 90% of patients if detected early. If the cancer has spread to surrounding tissues or lymph nodes in the neck 50-60% of patients can be cured. If the cancer has spread (metastasized) to parts of the body outside the head and neck, the cancer is not curable and treatment is aimed at prolonging quality of life.

After treatment patients generally need therapy to help with speech and swallowing. A small percentage of patients (5%) will not be able to swallow and will need to be fed through a feeding tube.

Complications

- airway obstruction
- loss of voice and speaking ability
- disfigurement of the neck or face
- hardening of the skin of the neck
- difficulty swallowing
- spread of the cancer to other body areas (metastasis)

Traditional Chinese Medicine to Treat Cancer:

The ultimate reasons for the formation of abnormal growth of cells (cancer) are complex and still not fully understood in modern western medicine. According to the principles of Traditional Chinese Medicine theory and the analysis of clinical data, cancer has internal and external causes.

This disease is characterized by principal deficiency and secondary excess, The cases with agglomeration of Dampness and heat or stagnation of toxic materials and blood stasis belong to excess.

Damp heat and excess of blood stasis are common at the early stage and the treatment principle should be expelling pathogenic factors. Deficiencies of the yin and qi are common at late stage and treatment principle should be supporting health qi.

Agglomeration of Dampness and Heat: hoarseness ,sore throat, neck pain, difficulty swallowing, swelling in the neck ,burning sensation in the throat, or fever, fullness in the chest,nausea,red tongue,with yellow and greasy fur, smooth and reopid pulse,

Therapeutic Methods: To clear away heat and Dampness.

Prescription: Modified Huanglian jie du Tang. Rew Dihuang, Dong Guaren, Yiyiren, Baijiangcao, Diding Pugongying at 15 g each. , Huang lian,, yinhua, Lianqiao, Mudapi, Gancao at 10g each.

THE PREVENTION OF CANCER: Malignant tumours are dangerous to human life. Therefore, people should be aware of prevention against carcinogenic factors:

- 1) Maintain emotional stability;
- 2) Avoid air pollution;
- 3) Get proper rest and exercise;
- 4) Avoid excessive alcohol intake;
- 5) Quit smoking;
- 6) Food should not be over cooked, avoid smoked meat and fish, and do not overeat. Cut down on animal fats and pickled vegetables.