

THYROID CANCER



Thyroid cancer is a type of cancer that originates in the thyroid gland. This gland is located in the neck, just above the collarbone, and is shaped like a butterfly. It produces hormones that help regulate your metabolism, heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature, among others.

Many types of growths and tumors can develop in the thyroid gland. Most of these are benign (non-cancerous), but others are malignant (cancerous). Thyroid nodules are common, and most people with thyroid cancer have a thyroid nodule that has no symptoms.

What causes Thyroid Cancer?

The exact cause of thyroid cancer is unknown. There are some risk factors that increase the likelihood of having the disease, such as:

- ✓ Being female
- ✓ Radiation treatments to areas of the head, neck or thorax, especially in infancy or childhood.
- ✓ A history of goiter (abnormal enlargement of the thyroid gland).
- ✓ Family history of thyroid cancer
- ✓ Being between the ages of 25 and 65

Sometimes medullary thyroid cancer is caused by a change in a gene that is passed down from parents to children. Talk to your physician about risk factors. An early diagnosis often allows for the possibility of more treatment options.

Symptoms of Thyroid Cancer

- ✓ A lump or mass in the neck
- ✓ Swelling in the neck
- ✓ Pain in the front of the neck, sometimes extending to the ears
- ✓ Hoarseness or other changes in your voice
- ✓ Trouble swallowing
- ✓ Shortness of breath
- ✓ Constant coughing that is not due to a cold

Types of Thyroid Cancer

Types	Description
Differentiated	Most thyroid cancers are differentiated. The cells of these cancers closely resemble normal thyroid tissue when viewed in the laboratory. These cancers originate from thyroid follicular cells.
Medullary	This type of thyroid is more difficult to find and treat. Sometimes this cancer can spread to other organs. There are two types of medullary thyroid cancer: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sporadic – occurs mainly in older adults• Familial - runs in families and can occur in every generation of a family
Anaplastic	It is a rare form of thyroid cancer. This cancer often spreads rapidly to the neck and other parts of the body, and is very difficult to treat.
Parathyroid	Parathyroid cancer is often detected because it causes high levels of calcium in the blood. This makes the person tired, weak, and sleepy.

How is Thyroid Cancer diagnosed?

Thyroid cancer can be diagnosed:

- ✓ During a visit to the physician, either because symptoms are present, or because it was detected in the routine medical examination.
- ✓ Tests that your physician ordered you to undergo such as: imaging studies, ultrasound, x-rays, biopsy, among others.

If it is suspected that you might have thyroid cancer, your physician will use one or more tests to confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment

Most types of thyroid cancer can be cured once treatment is started. The type of treatment your physician will recommend depends on the type and stage of the cancer, as well as your overall health. However, in some people, the cancer may never grow and not require treatment. Although most cancers are treated with removal of the thyroid gland (a thyroidectomy), you may need various treatments such as: thyroid hormone therapy, radioactive iodine, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, or any other treatment your physician identifies as ideal for you.

References:

- <https://www.thyroid.org/thyroid-cancer/>
- <https://www.cancer.gov/types/thyroid/patient/thyroid-treatment-pdq>
- <https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/thyroid-disease>
- <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/thyroid-cancer/about/what-is-thyroid-cancer.html>
- <https://medlineplus.gov/thyroidcancer.html>

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