

Head and Neck Cancer:

There are many types of head and neck cancer. The most common head and neck cancer is termed squamous cell cancer. The most common cause of squamous cell cancer of head and neck is use of tobacco and alcohol over many years.

Depending on the location of the tumor, symptoms can vary. Common symptoms include change in voice, difficulty or pain on swallowing, ear pain, weight loss, fatigue, lump in the neck, or difficulty breathing. Individuals with these symptoms for a prolonged duration require further evaluation by an ear, nose, throat physician.

Clinical evaluation helps to identify the source of the symptoms. Examination includes evaluation of the throat and voice box in clinic with use of an endoscope. If cancer is suspected, appropriate evaluation involving biopsy and imaging (CT scans) are pursued.

Based on the type and stage of cancer, treat strategies are individualized. Treatment strategies include surgical removal, radiation, and chemotherapy. Treatment of head and neck cancer is a multidisciplinary approach, with involvement of radiation oncologists and medical oncologists, along with the ear, nose, throat physician to achieve cure.