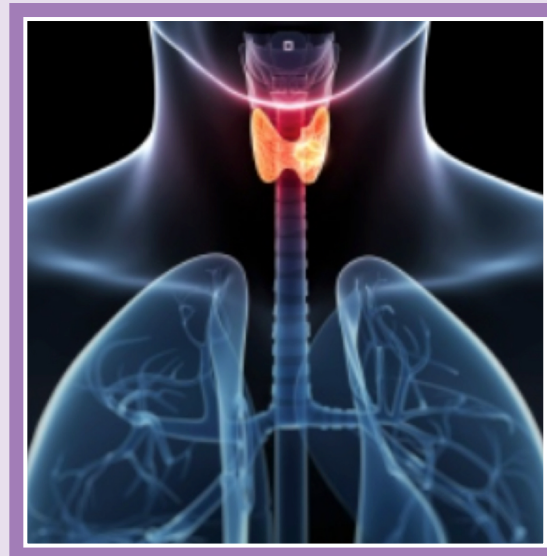


Detecting and Treating Thyroid Cancer

Your thyroid is an important butterfly-shaped gland in your neck, just below your Adam's apple. Hormones produced by the thyroid affect most organs in your body and control many of your body's most important functions. For example, they affect your breathing, heart rate, weight, digestion, and moods.

Detection

Thyroid cancer is most often detected when someone notices a swelling or lump in the neck. Other symptoms may include trouble breathing or swallowing, a constant cough, neck pain, or a change in your voice. You should see your doctor if you notice things like these.



Risk Factors

You are at greater risk of thyroid cancer if you:

- Are between 25 and 65
- Are Asian
- Have a family history of thyroid cancer
- Had radiation treatment or have been exposed to radiation
- Are a woman
- Smoke
- Are obese

Diagnosis

To get a correct diagnosis, your health care provider may use different kinds of tests. It might be a simple blood test or imaging test. It will often include a biopsy, where bits of tissue collected with a needle or during surgery are examined for signs of cancer. There are many different types of thyroid cancers. Your biopsy will tell your doctor whether you have cancer and help decide the best treatment for that particular cancer if you do.

Treatment

Your health care provider may offer a combination of treatments. These may include surgery, radioactive iodine, hormone treatment, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, or targeted therapy. Targeted therapy uses drugs or other substances to attack specific cancer cells with less harm to normal cells.

Thyroid cancers are highly curable, with the most common forms having a cure rate of near 100%.

