



What is head and neck cancer?

There are up to 40 different types and sub-types of head and neck cancer. Each is named after the area of the body where abnormal cell growth started.

The main types of head and neck cancer include:

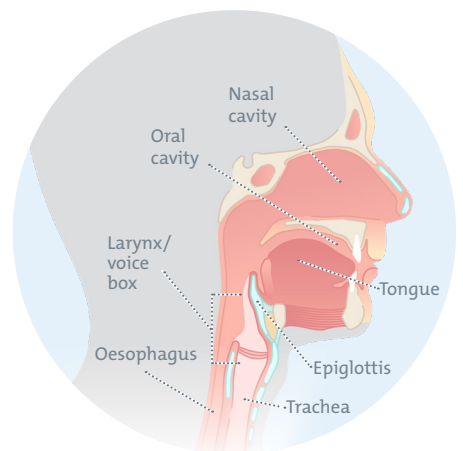
- > **Mouth (oral) cancer** can include the lips, tongue, inside of the cheek, jaw and gums.
- > **Nose (nasal and sinus) cancer** includes the nasal cavity, sinuses behind the forehead, between the eyes and under the eyes.
- > **Throat (pharyngeal) cancer** is found in the throat, a tube that runs from the back of the nose to the oesophagus and trachea.
- > **Voice box (laryngeal) cancer** is found at the lowest part of the throat, known as the voice box.
- > **Salivary gland cancer** is found in the salivary glands, on each side of the face.

Signs and symptoms

Each type of head and neck cancer is different, with unique symptoms.

Signs and symptoms of head and neck cancer can include:

- > a lump in the neck or a sore throat that doesn't heal
- > persistent jaw or ear pain
- > swelling or numbness of the face or mouth
- > vision problems.



Common tests used to diagnose head and neck cancer

To investigate your health concerns, your doctor may schedule one or more of the following tests.

Blood tests

Blood tests aren't typically used to diagnose types of head and neck cancer but can be used to investigate certain types of thyroid cancers.

Biopsy

A biopsy is the removal of a small piece of tissue that will be examined under a microscope. Your doctor may request you undergo a biopsy to determine whether you have cancer, or to diagnose the type of cancer.

Nasendoscopy

A nasendoscopy is a common diagnostic test for throat cancer. A thin tube with a camera at the end, known as an endoscope, allows your doctor to view your nose, throat and voice box closely.

Imaging tests

Depending on symptoms, your doctor and care team may schedule imaging tests to assess or diagnose your cancer. Each imaging test provides a different view of your body. Common scans include an ultrasound, CT, MRI or PET.

Treatment options

Following a diagnosis of head and neck cancer, your oncologist and cancer care team will create a tailored treatment plan specific to your circumstances and stage of cancer.

Surgery

Surgery is a common treatment for head and neck cancer and there are several different types of surgeries.

Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy is a common form of treatment involving the use of anti-cancer drugs to attack cancer cells. Chemotherapy is often used alongside other treatments such as radiotherapy or surgery.

Radiotherapy

Radiotherapy is the use of radiation to treat and manage cancer. During radiotherapy, you are likely to wear a mask so you can stay still and help the machine target where the cancer is.

Targeted therapy

Targeted therapy is an anti-cancer drug that targets specific features of cancer cells to reduce the cancer growth. Targeted therapy drugs won't necessarily be an option for every patient. We recommend you speak with your specialist to understand more.

Immunotherapy

Immunotherapy uses drugs to support the immune system to recognise cancerous cells. Nivolumab is a checkpoint inhibitor drug sometimes given to head and neck cancer patients.

Nutrition support

Nutrition support is an integral component of head and neck cancer treatment and management. Our Epworth multidisciplinary team ensures patients receive nutritional assessment at the beginning of treatment to support their ongoing health.

Your care team

Throughout your head and neck cancer journey, your team will involve specialist surgeons and nursing and allied health staff. You may also see other specialists, such as a medical oncologist or radiation oncologist.

Your care team is here to provide you with comprehensive treatment, access to talented, caring specialists and support for you, and your family, during this challenging time.

Why choose Epworth for cancer care?

No one wants to experience cancer. *Our goal is to support you.*

You can expect a trusted specialist who will listen to your concerns and discuss the latest treatment options available for you to choose from. You will receive care in comfortable, nurturing spaces where your loved ones can be a part of your journey.

Your own team of experts – doctors, nurses and allied health professionals – will focus on your wellbeing. **Ask your GP for a referral to Epworth.**

The head and neck cancer pathway at Epworth

Information to help you feel prepared for your next steps.

> Symptoms

Speak to your GP if you experience symptoms of head and neck cancer.

> Diagnosis

Your GP can refer you to Epworth to access several thorough diagnostic tests to investigate head and neck cancer.

> Treatment

Epworth specialists are here to help you understand your treatment options so you can make an informed choice of treatment.

> Rehabilitation

Holistic rehabilitation programs are available before, after or during treatment, tailored to your individual needs.

> After treatment

Epworth patients in remission from head and neck cancer may need follow-up appointments.

Choose your Epworth head and neck cancer specialist



Click
or scan the
QR code



- > Ear, nose and throat (ENT) surgeons
- > Medical oncologists
- > Plastic and reconstructive surgery service
- > Radiation oncology service

Epworth locations for cancer care

We are Victoria's largest not-for-profit private hospital group, renowned for excellence in diagnosis, treatment, care and rehabilitation. You will find specialist wards, imaging, pathology, and more, all onsite.

Get access to:

- > Your choice of specialist and location.
- > Timely screening, investigation and diagnosis.
- > Treatment (including surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, targeted treatment and clinical trials).
- > Modern inpatient and day oncology facilities.
- > Multidisciplinary care with experts across specialties.

Epworth Eastern

1 Arnold Street
Box Hill VIC 3128
Phone 03 8807 7100

Epworth Freemasons

109 Albert Street
East Melbourne VIC 3002
Phone 03 9483 3833

Epworth Geelong

1 Epworth Place
Waurm Ponds VIC 3216
Phone 03 5271 7777

Epworth Richmond

89 Bridge Road
Richmond VIC 3121
Phone 03 9426 666

To become an Epworth patient, ask your GP for a referral to an Epworth specialist.



For more information about head and neck cancer visit epworth.org.au/oncology