

Laryngeal Cancer: Tests After Diagnosis



What tests might I have after being diagnosed?

After a diagnosis of laryngeal cancer, you will likely need other tests. These help your healthcare providers learn more about your cancer. They can help show if the cancer has grown into nearby areas or spread to other parts of your body. The test results help your healthcare providers decide the best ways to treat the cancer. If you have any questions about these or other tests, be sure to talk with your healthcare team.

Some of the tests used after diagnosis may have also been used to find and diagnose the cancer. The tests you may have can include:

- Chest X-ray
- CT scan
- PET (positron-emission tomography) scan
- MRI
- Ultrasound
- Bone scan

Imaging Tests

Chest X-ray

This X-ray may be done to see if the cancer has spread to your lungs.

CT scan

In this test, an X-ray beam takes a series of pictures of the inside of your body from many angles. These images are then combined by a computer, giving a detailed, 3-D picture of your insides. CT scans can be used to find out the size of the tumor and see if it has spread to nearby tissues or lymph nodes. It can also be used to see if the cancer has spread to your lungs.

PET scan

A PET scan can look at your whole body. For this test, a mildly radioactive sugar is put into your blood through a vein. Then a machine takes pictures that show where in your body the sugar is being used the most. These areas may be cancer.

Some newer machines can do PET and CT scans at the same time. This allows areas that show up on the PET scan to be compared to the more detailed images of the CT scan.

MRI

This test uses radio waves, large magnets, and a computer to make detailed pictures of the inside of your body. It may be used to look for cancer that's spread to your neck.

Ultrasound

This test may be used to look for swollen lymph nodes in your neck, which can be a sign of cancer spread. It can also be used to see if the cancer has spread to your liver.

Bone scan

For this test, a small amount of a mildly radioactive substance is put into your blood through a vein. This substance travels through your bloodstream and collects where there's abnormal bone growth. A machine scans your body for the places where the substance has collected. These may be areas where the cancer has spread to the bones.

Working with your healthcare provider

Your healthcare provider will talk with you about which tests you'll have. Make sure to get ready for the tests as instructed. Ask questions and talk about any concerns you have.

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