

Mouth and Throat Tumors



Finding out you have a tumor is scary. You may wonder what effect it will have on your life. Non-cancerous (benign) tumors are easily treated, Cancerous tumors may also be managed well when detected early. Actively participate with your healthcare providers to decide on your treatment, and be sure to address your concerns.

What is a tumor?

A tumor is a mass of abnormal cells. It's either slow-growing and not cancer (benign) or fast-growing and cancer (malignant). Some tumors, especially cancerous ones, can be life-threatening. But most tumors can be treated.

Who's at risk for a cancerous tumor?

You're more likely to get a tumor of the mouth or throat if you:

- Smoke cigarettes, pipes, or cigars
- Use chewing tobacco or snuff
- Drink alcohol
- Have poor oral health
- Are exposed to certain industrial chemicals
- Had a mouth or throat tumor in the past
- History of radiation exposure in the head or neck region
- Have a human papillomavirus (HPV) infection
- Are male (twice as common than females)
- Have poor nutrition and have extra body weight

Symptoms of a tumor in the mouth

If you have a mouth tumor, you or your healthcare provider may have noticed one or more of the following:

- White or red patches on the cheeks, tongue, palate, or gums
- Mouth pain or numbness that doesn't go away
- A sore that doesn't heal in 1 or 2 weeks
- Loose teeth without any obvious injury
- Bleeding from the mouth that doesn't stop after a few days
- A swelling or lump that doesn't go away
- Problems with your teeth, dentures, or chewing

Symptoms of a tumor in the throat

If you have a throat tumor, you or your healthcare provider may have noticed one or more of the following:

- Hoarseness that doesn't go away
- Trouble swallowing
- A lump in your neck
- Throat pain that doesn't go away
- Aching, pain, or pressure in your ear
- A lasting cough, with or without bloody sputum
- Unexplained weight loss

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