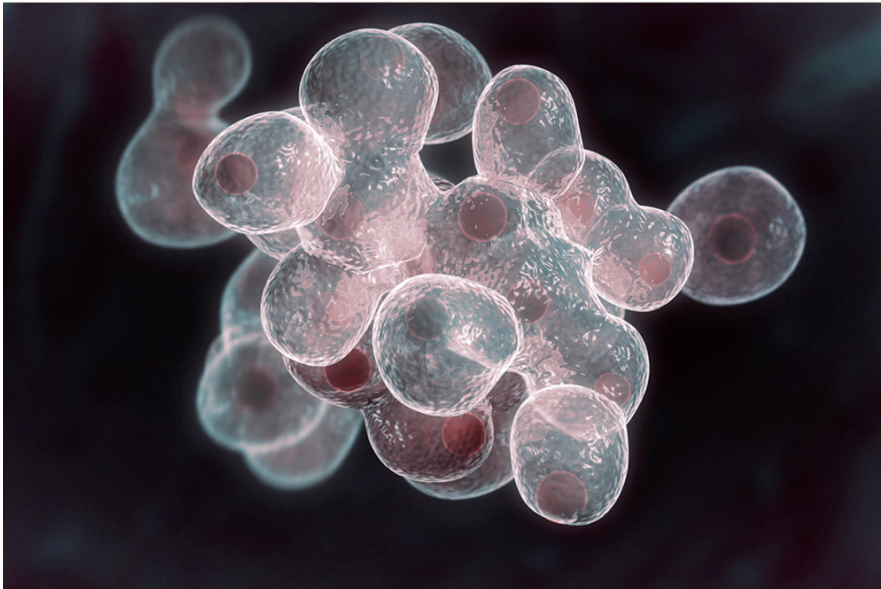




Hypopharyngeal Cancer



Overview

This is a cancer of your lower throat. It affects the part of your throat called the "hypopharynx." It's the entrance to your esophagus (the tube that carries food to your stomach).

Causes

What causes this cancer? It happens when the genetic code in one of the cells of your salivary glands becomes damaged. The damaged cell is a cancer cell. It may grow and divide uncontrollably, creating more cancer cells.

Risk Factors

Your risk for this cancer is higher if you use alcohol or tobacco frequently. It's higher if your head or neck has been exposed to radiation. It's higher if you've had other cancers of the head or neck. Other factors can raise your risk, too. Ask your doctor for a full list.

Symptoms

What are the symptoms of hypopharyngeal cancer? You can have a sore throat. You may have trouble swallowing. Your voice may sound hoarse. You may feel a lump in your neck, and you may have pain, ringing or a sense of fullness in one or both of your ears. Because these symptoms are similar to a common cold, you may not realize you have cancer at first.

Treatment

How do we treat it? Your options depend on your particular cancer, and what stage it's in. You may benefit from chemotherapy or radiation therapy. You may benefit from immunotherapy. You may need surgery. Your doctor will create a plan that's right for you.