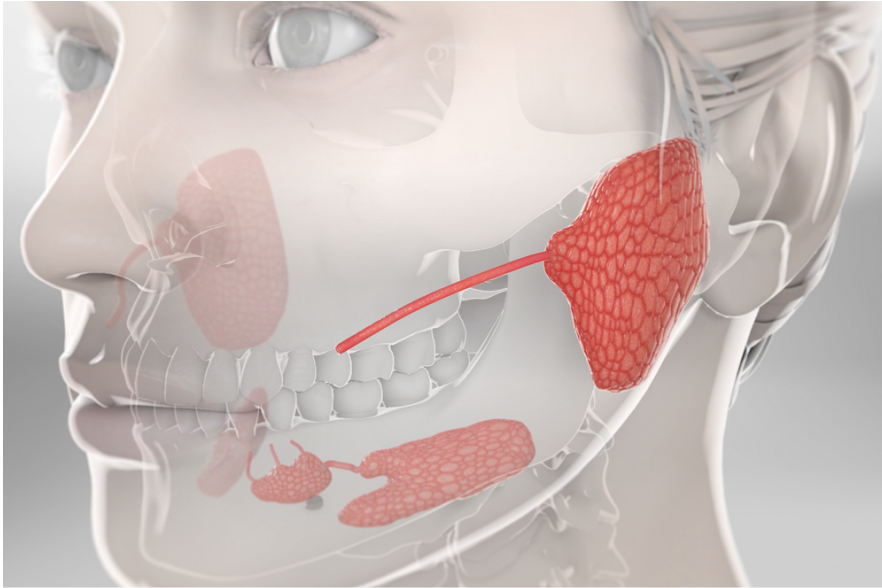




Salivary Gland Cancer



Overview

This cancer forms in a gland that makes your saliva. There are three pairs of these glands, and they're on both sides of your face. Salivary gland cancer can form in any of them.

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 salivary gland cancer is higher if you use alcohol or tobacco. It's higher if your head or neck was exposed to radiation. This cancer is also more common in people age 55 or older.

Symptoms

What are the symptoms? You may have pain in your mouth, jaw, or somewhere else in your face or neck. You may feel a lump in one of these places. It may be hard to open your mouth all the way. You may have trouble swallowing. And you may notice bleeding in your mouth.

Treatment

How do we treat salivary gland cancer? We often treat it with surgery. You may also benefit from radiation therapy or chemotherapy. Your doctor will create a plan that's right for you.