



# Thyroid Cancer

Are you at risk?

What are the signs and symptoms?

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## About Thyroid Cancer

The thyroid gland is a butterfly-shaped gland that is located in the lower front of the neck. The thyroid's job is to make thyroid hormones, which are carried in the blood to every part of the body. Thyroid hormones help the body to use energy, stay warm and keep the brain, heart, muscles, and other organs working as they should.

# Here's what you should watch for...

## Possible Signs and Symptoms

The important things to remember is that cancers that start in your thyroid generally do not cause any symptoms. Thyroid function tests are often normal even when cancer is present, and the best way to find a thyroid cancer is to ask your doctor to check your neck!

The most common sign of thyroid cancer is a lump in your neck.

Sometimes large lumps may cause:

- Pain in your neck, jaw or ear
- Difficulty in breathing or swallowing
- An irritation or 'tickle in the throat'
- A change in your voice
- Swollen glands in the neck

Often, thyroid cancer is discovered by accident when imaging tests like CT scans and neck ultrasounds are done for different reasons.

## Early detection

Cancer starts when cells in the body begin to grow out of control. Cells in nearly any part of the body can become cancer, and can spread to other areas of the body.

Thyroid cancer is an uncommon type of cancer. Many people who have it, recover well after treatment if the cancer is found early. After it is treated, thyroid cancer may come back, sometimes many years after treatment.

Thyroid cancer is commonly diagnosed at a younger age than most other adult cancers. Nearly 3 out of 4 cases are found in women and about 2% of thyroid cancers occur in children and teens.

## What puts you at risk?

For most patients, we do not know why thyroid cancers develop, but there are some risk factors.

## Risk factors

- A history of exposure to radiation, e.g previous treatment for childhood cancers
- Family history of thyroid cancer
- A diet low in iodine