

Radiation Therapy for Head & Neck Cancer



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Head & neck cancer encompasses a group of cancers that develop in the mouth, throat, nose, sinuses, and salivary glands. One of the primary treatment options for head and neck cancer is radiation therapy, a highly effective approach that rivals surgery in terms of cure rates.

Advantages of Radiation Therapy

- » Radiation therapy is a non-invasive treatment option, typically offered as curative treatment or in combination with chemotherapy or surgery.
- » Radiation is a quick treatment with minimal or no pain and a short recovery time.
- » Since it is non-invasive, radiation therapy is an outpatient treatment.
- » Radiation therapy will be targeted to a specific area of the body, which allows for precise treatment of the cancer while minimizing damage to healthy tissue.

Effectiveness of Radiation Therapy

Radiation therapy consistently shows efficacy in treating head and neck cancer, either as a primary treatment for early stages or combined with surgery or chemotherapy for advanced cases. It helps prevent cancer recurrence post-surgery and improves cure rates. Additionally, it relieves symptoms like pain or discomfort in advanced stages, showcasing its multifaceted benefits for patients.

Side Effects

Radiation therapy for head and neck cancer is an outpatient procedure with side effects that may include fatigue, dry mouth, taste changes, changes in swallowing or speech, skin reactions, or other localized effects. Other side effects may occur depending on the specific treatment area.

Conclusion

With over 67,000 new cases diagnosed in the United States annually, head and neck cancer is a significant health concern. Radiation therapy stands out as a vital and successful treatment option for many patients, offering high cure rates and preserving quality of life.

Head & neck cancer survivors should continue to receive regular follow-up care, including regular scans, to detect any potential recurrence of the disease.

QUICK FACTS

75%
of head & neck patients benefit from radiation therapy

65%
survival rate

Approximately
80%
of tonsil and tongue cancers are related to the HPV virus*

*The HPV virus can be prevented with the vaccine

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