

INTRODUCTION TO THE DISEASE

Cancers of the head and neck occur in the mucosal lining of mouth or throat and are classified by location: oral cavity (mouth), oropharynx (throat), nasopharynx (back of the nose), hypopharynx (part of the throat just before the esophagus), and larynx (voicebox). Cancers from these sites are commonly treated with one or more of the following treatments: surgery, radiation, chemotherapy. Multiple specialties participate in the treatment of such cancers, such as head and neck surgeons, radiation oncologists and medical oncologists. It is also common to undergo different imaging studies such as MRI, CT and/or PET/CT scans to determine the size and extent of the cancer, and to determine whether it has spread. Biopsies are often performed to confirm the diagnosis. Lastly, other providers such as speech and language pathologists, physical therapists, psychologists and nutritionists are often involved in the care and rehabilitation of patients with these cancers.

