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Laryngeal and Hypopharyngeal Cancer - Symptoms and Signs [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 04/2014

ON THIS PAGE: You will find out more about body changes and other things that can signal a problem that may need medical care. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

People with laryngeal or hypopharyngeal cancer may experience the following symptoms or signs. Sometimes, people with laryngeal or hypopharyngeal cancer do not show any of these symptoms. Or, these symptoms may be caused by a medical condition that is not cancer.

- Hoarseness or other voice changes that do not go away within two weeks (often an early symptom)
- An enlarged lymph node or a lump in the neck
- Airway obstruction, difficulty breathing, and noisy breathing
- Persistent sore throat or a feeling that something is caught in the throat
- Difficulty swallowing that does not go away
- Ear pain
- Chronic bad breath
- Choking
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fatigue

If you are concerned about one or more of the symptoms or signs on this list, please talk with a doctor and/or dentist, especially if they don't go away or get worse. Your doctor will ask how long and how often you've been experiencing the symptom(s), in addition to other questions. This is to help find out the cause of the problem, called a [diagnosis](#) [3].

Because many of these symptoms can also be caused by other noncancerous health conditions, it is always important to receive regular health and dental screenings, especially for those who routinely drink alcohol or use tobacco products or have used them in the past.

If cancer is diagnosed, relieving symptoms remains an important part of cancer care and treatment. This may also be called symptom management, palliative care, or supportive care. Be

sure to talk with your health care team about symptoms you experience, including any new symptoms or a change in symptoms. When detected early, laryngeal and hypopharyngeal cancer can often be treated successfully while preserving the function of the larynx and/or hypopharynx.

The next section helps explain what tests and scans may be needed to learn more about the cause of the symptoms. Use the menu on the side of your screen to select Diagnosis, or you can select another section, to continue reading this guide.

Links:

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/laryngeal-and-hypopharyngeal-cancer/symptoms-and-signs>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19001>