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## Laryngeal and Hypopharyngeal Cancer - Latest Research [1]

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

**ON THIS PAGE:** You will read about the scientific research being done now to learn more about these types of cancer and how to treat them. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

Doctors are working to learn more about laryngeal and hypopharyngeal cancer, ways to prevent them, how to best treat them, and how to provide the best care to people diagnosed with either of these diseases. The following areas of research may include new options for patients through [clinical trials](#) [3]. Always talk with your doctor about the diagnostic and treatment options best for you.

**Radiation therapy approaches.** Researchers are evaluating more effective ways of using radiation treatment. One promising approach, radiosensitization, involves giving drugs that make the cancer cells more sensitive to radiation therapy so they can be destroyed more easily. Another approach is called hyperfractionated radiation therapy, in which radiation therapy is given in several small doses per day.

**Targeted and tumor-specific therapy** [4]. Increasing knowledge of the biology of cancer is leading to the development of biologic and targeted therapies. Multiple new drugs are currently under various stages of development. They offer real hope for targeted tumor-specific approaches with equal or greater effectiveness and fewer side effects for these types of cancer and for head and neck cancer overall.

As discussed in the [Treatment Options](#) [5] section, cetuximab, a monoclonal antibody directed at the epidermal growth factor receptor, or EGFR, has already been approved for use with current radiation therapy approaches. A monoclonal antibody is a type of targeted therapy. It is directed against a specific protein in the cancer cells, in this case EGFR, and it does not affect cells that don't have that protein. Other EGFR inhibitors under study are erlotinib (Tarceva), gefitinib (Iressa), lapatinib (Tykerb), and panitumumab (Vectibix), often in combination with other treatments.

In addition, another avenue researchers are studying includes [anti-angiogenesis therapy](#) [6]. Anti-angiogenesis therapy is a type of targeted therapy that is focused on stopping angiogenesis,

which is the process of making new blood vessels. Because a tumor needs the nutrients delivered by blood vessels to grow and spread, the goal of anti-angiogenesis therapies is to ?starve? the tumor. Drugs under investigation in this area include bevacizumab (Avastin) and sunitinib (Sutent).

**Chemoprevention** [7]. Researchers are evaluating the benefits of using chemotherapy as a way to prevent the development of a second cancer after treatment for laryngeal or hypopharyngeal cancer has finished.

**Photodynamic therapy.** In photodynamic therapy, a substance that is sensitive to light (photosensitive) is injected into the blood. Cancer cells hold onto the substance longer than healthy cells. Then, laser lights are directed at the area of the tumor, and the substance in the cells is activated to destroy the cancer cells.

**Supportive care.** Clinical trials are underway to find better ways of reducing symptoms and side effects of current laryngeal and hypopharyngeal cancer treatments in order to improve patients? comfort and quality of life.

### Looking for More About the Latest Research?

If you would like additional information about the latest areas of research regarding laryngeal and hypopharyngeal cancer, explore these related items that take you outside of this guide:

- To find clinical trials specific to your diagnosis, talk with your doctor or [search online clinical trial databases now](#) [8]. Please note this link will take you outside of this guide.
- Visit ASCO?s [CancerProgress.Net](#) [9] website to learn more about the historical pace of research for [head and neck cancer](#) [10]. Please note this link takes you to a separate ASCO website.

*The next section addresses how to cope with the symptoms of the disease or the side effects of its treatment. Use the menu on the side of your screen to select Coping with Side Effects, or you can select another section, to continue reading this guide.*

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#### Links:

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

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

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19004>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24729>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19003>

[6] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24376>

[7] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24973>

[8] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24878>

[9] <http://www.cancerprogress.net/>

[10] [http://www.cancerprogress.net/timeline/head\\_and\\_neck](http://www.cancerprogress.net/timeline/head_and_neck)