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Laryngeal and Hypopharyngeal Cancer - Questions to Ask the Doctor [1]

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

ON THIS PAGE: You will find some questions to ask your doctor or other members of your health care team to help you better understand your diagnosis, treatment plan, and overall care. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

Talking often with the doctor is important [3] to make informed decisions about your health care. These suggested questions are a starting point to help you learn more about your cancer care and treatment. You are also encouraged to ask additional questions that are important to you. You may want to print this list and bring it to your next appointment, or [download Cancer.Net's free mobile app](#) [4] for an e-list and other interactive tools to manage your care.

- What type of head and neck cancer do I have? Where exactly is it located?
- What is the stage and grade of the cancer? What does this mean?
- Can you explain my pathology report (laboratory test results) to me?
- What are the treatment options?
- What clinical trials are open to me? Where are they located, and how do I find out more about them?
- What treatment plan do you recommend? Why?
- What is the goal of each treatment? Is it to eliminate the cancer, help me feel better, or both?
- Should I talk with another doctor to get a second opinion?
- Who will be part of my health care team, and what does each member do?
- Who will be coordinating my overall treatment and follow-up care?
- Should I see any other specialists before starting treatment? Specifically, should I talk with a radiation oncologist, medical oncologist, or plastic surgeon?
- Can you recommend an oncologic dentist?
- Can you recommend a speech pathologist?
- What are the possible side effects of each treatment option, both in the short term and the long term?
- What can be done to prevent or relieve these side effects?
- How will this treatment affect my daily life? Will I be able to work, exercise, and perform my usual activities?

- Could this treatment affect my sex life? If so, how and for how long?
- Could this treatment affect my ability to become pregnant or have children? If so, should I talk with a fertility specialist before cancer treatment begins?
- Will I need cancer rehabilitation services after treatment? What can I expect?
- What functional deficits in speech, swallowing, or shoulder motion will likely occur, and what rehabilitation services are available?
- If I have surgery, will there be need for major reconstruction? How will this affect my ability to speak and eat?
- If surgery is done, will there be a need for a neck dissection (removal of lymph nodes)? If so, what type of dissection will be done? What does this mean?
- If I receive radiation therapy, will there be any lasting side effects, such as loss of saliva, loss of taste, or permanent difficulty in swallowing?
- How likely is it that I will lose my voice box (larynx)? If this is necessary, what are the options available for voice/speech rehabilitation?
- How will my nutrition be maintained if the treatment affects my ability to eat the foods I am used to eating?
- If I am a smoker, how can you help me quit?
- If I am a smoker, will quitting help this treatment have a better outcome?
- What follow-up tests will be needed, and how often will I need them?
- If I'm worried about managing the costs related to my cancer care, who can help me with these concerns?
- What support services are available for me? To my family?
- Whom should I call for questions or problems?
- Are there any other questions I should be asking?

The next section offers some more resources that may be helpful to you. Use the menu on the side of your screen to select Additional Resources, or you can select another section, to continue reading this guide.

Links:

- [1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/laryngeal-and-hypopharyngeal-cancer/questions-ask-doctor>
- [2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>
- [3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24958>
- [4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/29951>