



# APTA Oncology<sup>SM</sup>

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Student and New  
Professional Subcommittee

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## Dx

# Downloads:

# Head & Neck Cancer



# Head & Neck Cancer



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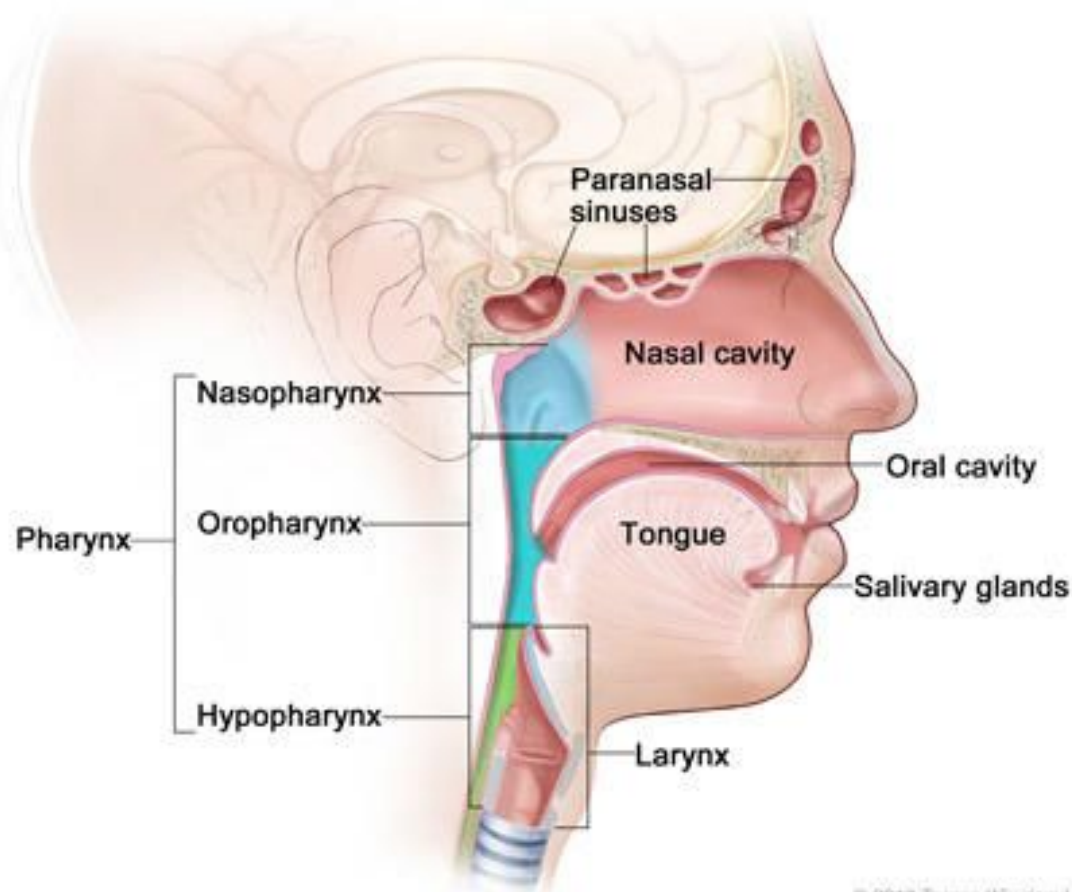
## Common Signs

- White/red patch in mouth
- Difficulty breathing, speaking, swallowing
- Difficulty hearing; pain or ringing in ears
- Sinuses that do not clear
- Frequent headaches
- Bleeding from the nose or in the mouth
- Swelling or lump under the chin
- Poor fitting dentures; swollen jaw
- Numbness/paralysis of facial muscles

## Risk Factors

- Poor oral hygiene
- Tobacco/alcohol
- Environmental exposure
- HPV

**Head and Neck Cancer Regions**



# Head & Neck Cancer



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## Cancer Treatment Options

- **Surgery**
  - Neck/lymph node dissection
  - Excision (soft tissue, teeth, and/or bone)
  - Reconstructive surgery (possible fibula free flap)
- **Radiation Therapy**
- **Chemotherapy**
- **Targeted Therapy**

- **Lymphedema of head & neck**
- **CN XI dysfunction (SCM)**
- **Cervical and/or shoulder dysfunction/pain**
- **TMJ Dysfunction; Trismus (a.k.a. lockjaw)**
- **Difficulty swallowing/speaking (SLP referral)**
- **Lower leg/ankle dysfunction (fibula free flap)**
- **Temporary G-tube and/or tracheostomy post-surgery**
- **Cancer-related Fatigue**
- **Chemotoxicity side effects and radiation fibrosis**

## Clinical Implications

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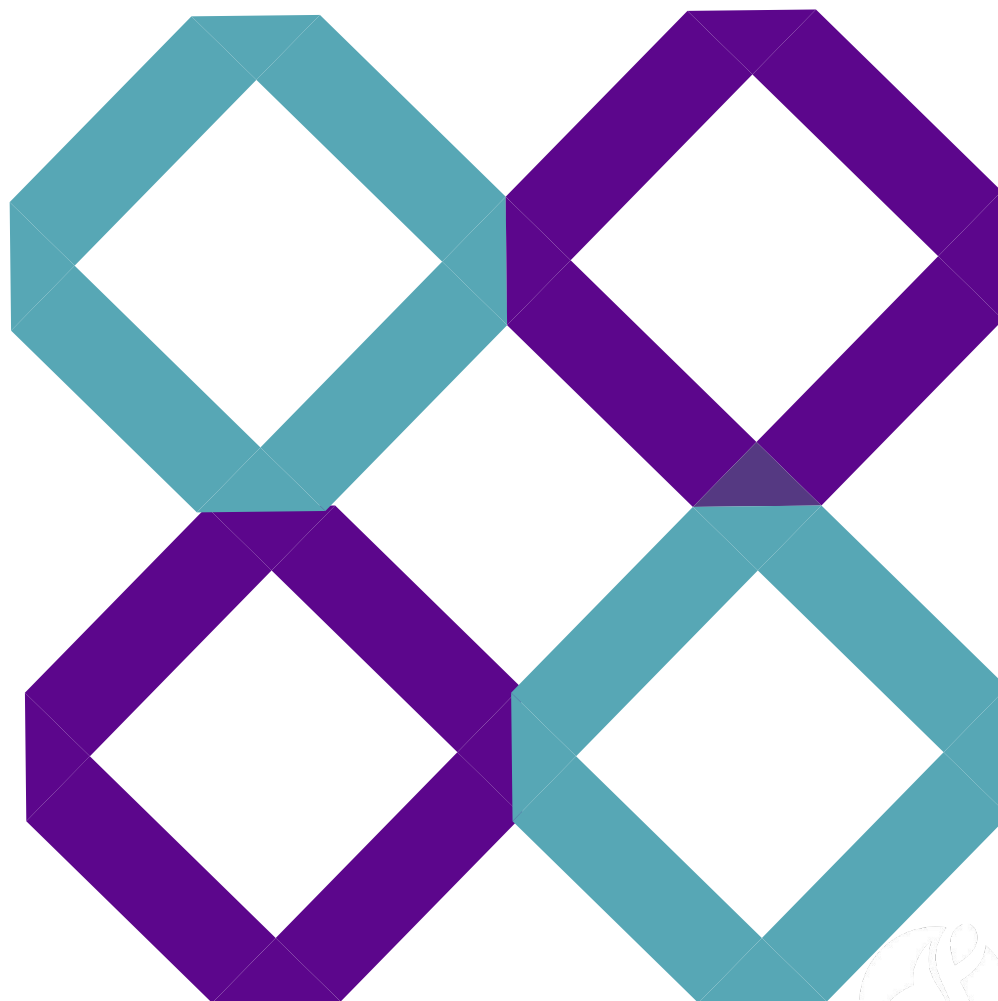
## Physical Therapist's Role

### Screen

Screen head & neck region. Identify possible flags and refer as needed.

### Intervene

Treat the impairments and refer when appropriate.



### Assess

Identify the impairments related to oncologic treatment interventions.

### Educate

Educate patients regarding impairments, treatment options, rehab prognosis.



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## Takeaways

1

Physical Therapists can aid in the detection of suspicious signs & symptoms that may require referral

2

Head & neck cancer treatments can lead to a multitude of impairments that may impact patient function, safety, and quality of life

3

Physical Therapists can help optimize post-surgical functional outcomes in patients with head & neck cancer

4

Physical Therapists can reduce severity of functional decline and/or pain related to head & neck cancer treatment

# Head & Neck Cancer



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## Resources

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