



APTA OncologySM

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Student and New
Professional Subcommittee



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Downloads:

Thyroid Cancer



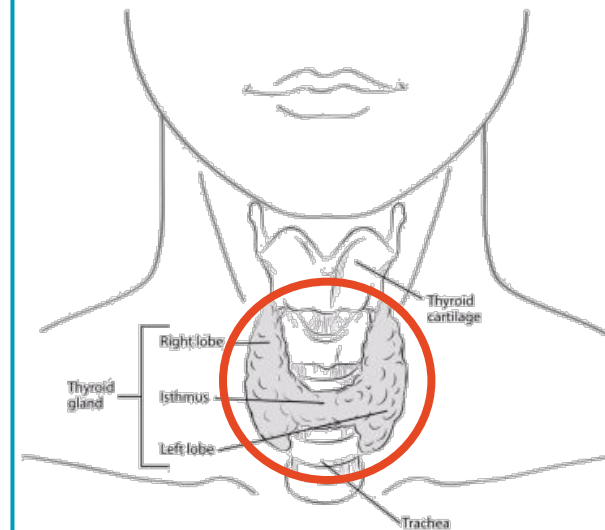
Thyroid Cancer



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What is Thyroid Cancer?

- Cancer that starts in the cells of the thyroid
 - Most commonly in **follicular cells**
- The thyroid produces **hormones** that regulate different body functions, including:
 - **Heart rate**
 - **Blood pressure**
 - **Body temperature**
 - **Weight**



Risk Factors

- Occurs more often in **women** than in men
- Exposure to high levels of **radiation** is a risk factor
- **Inherited gene mutations** can predispose individuals
- **Healthy weight** reduces risk in men and women

Common Signs and Symptoms

- Often asymptomatic
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Difficulty swallowing
- Lump on throat
- Pain in neck or throat
- Voice changes

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Treatment Options

- **Surgery**
 - Thyroidectomy
 - Lobectomy
 - Lymph Node Dissection
- **Thyroid Hormone Therapy**
- **Radioactive Iodine**
- **Radiation**
- **Chemotherapy**
- **Targeted Therapy**

- May present similarly to other **head and neck cancers**
- Neck lymphedema after lymph node dissection
- Difficulty swallowing and/or speaking
- Impaired soft tissue mobility of neck from radiation and scar tissue
- Shoulder dysfunction from cranial nerve XI damage

Clinical Implications

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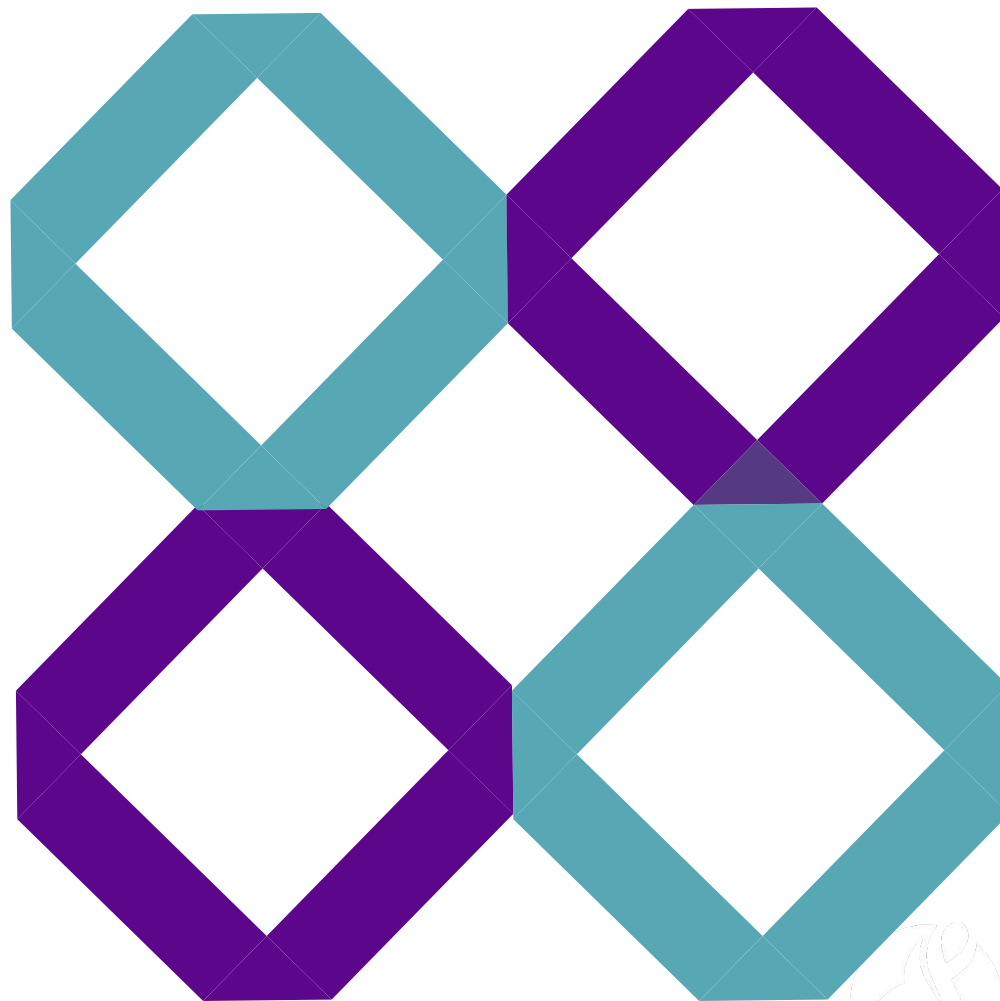
Physical Therapist's Role

Screen

Screen for associated signs & symptoms and promote annual physical exam with primary care provider

Intervene

Identify and treat impairments from thyroid cancer and treatment options



Refer

Refer to other healthcare professionals for impairments identified beyond scope of practice, (i.e. speech-language pathologist)

Educate

Promote physical therapy from diagnosis through survivorship to improve quality of life and outcomes



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Takeaways

1

Although not classified as a head and neck cancer, thyroid cancer can cause similar impairments

2

Lymphedema and musculoskeletal impairments that arise can be managed with physical therapy

3

Refer to a speech-language pathologist for any speech or swallowing dysfunction

4

Advocate for lifelong physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight to decrease risk of thyroid cancer

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Resources

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