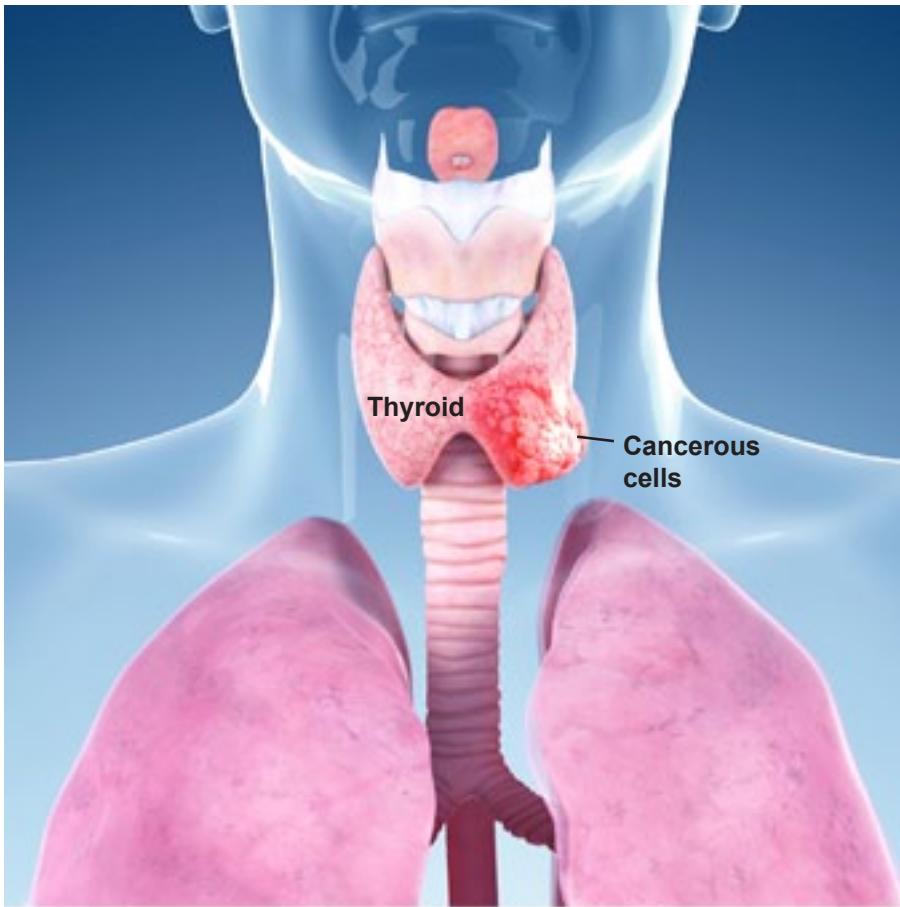


Thyroid Cancer



Overview

This is an abnormal growth of cells in your thyroid, a butterfly-shaped gland. Your thyroid is located in the base of your neck. The hormones it produces help regulate your metabolism, heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature.

Causes

Cancer forms because of a mutation in a cell's DNA. This is the genetic blueprint that provides instructions for how every cell grows and functions. A mutation causes the cell to begin to divide abnormally and uncontrollably. This creates more damaged cells. A mass of these abnormal cells is called a "tumor."

Risk Factors

Thyroid cancer is more common in women than in men. You have a higher risk if you have been exposed to radiation. Genetic factors may also increase your risk.

Symptoms

During the early stages of thyroid cancer, you may not notice any symptoms. As the cancer progresses, you may notice a lump beneath the skin of your neck. You may feel pain in your neck and your throat. You may have difficulty swallowing. Your voice may change, and you may become hoarse. And, the lymph nodes in your neck may become swollen.

Treatment

Treatment depends on the type and the stage of your cancer and on other factors. You may benefit from surgery to remove some or all of your thyroid. You may benefit from chemotherapy, radiation therapy or targeted drug therapy. Your healthcare provider can create a care plan that is right for your needs.