An Integrated Approach to Head & Neck Cancer Care

The Head & Neck Cancer Program at the Temple University Hospital Cancer Center in Philadelphia has the experience, skill and advanced technology needed to precisely diagnose and effectively treat cancers that occur in or around the throat, larynx (voice box), nose, sinuses, thyroid and mouth.

Temple’s multidisciplinary Head & Neck cancer group includes board-certified otolaryngologists (ear, nose and throat surgeons), radiation oncologists, medical oncologists, radiologists, plastic/reconstructive surgeons, pathologists, dentists, speech language therapists, oncology nutritionists and oncology-certified nurses who work together to coordinate each patient’s care.

Each patient’s final treatment plan, whether it includes surgery, radiation or chemotherapy, is determined at the weekly multidisciplinary Head & Neck Tumor Board, where physicians from these disciplines and supportive oncologic care staff discuss each individual case to determine the best options for treatment. The result is high-quality, compassionate care for all patients.

Advanced Tools for Precise Detection and Diagnosis

The Head & Neck cancer group uses sophisticated imaging technologies and minimally invasive procedures to properly diagnose and pinpoint the location of tumors.

Advanced diagnostic tools offered at Temple University Hospital include:

- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)
- Computed tomography (CT Scan)
- Positron emission tomography (PET)
- Ultrasound
- Endoscopy

Personalized Treatment for Each Patient

Head and neck cancers are often located in areas of the body that involve vital daily functions such as swallowing, breathing and speaking. The goal at the Temple Cancer Center is to cure a patient’s cancer while preserving these vital functions.

Treatment of head and neck cancer often requires a combination of surgery, radiation therapy and chemotherapy. The exact treatment a patient receives depends on several factors, including the type of cancer, its size and stage, its location and the patient’s overall health.

Surgery

Surgery is a common treatment for cancers of the head and neck. Temple’s head and neck specialists are experienced in the full range of surgical treatments, including complex tumor removal, with an emphasis on protecting existing structures such as the voice box and airway.
Reconstructive procedures—including free-tissue transfer (using skin, bone and/or muscle tissue from one area of the body to reconstruct defects following tumor removal)—are used to preserve appearance as well as important functions.

Following a surgical procedure, reconstruction of the bones is also possible. This involves taking bone from another part of the body to reconstruct bone that was removed in the head and neck during surgery. Similarly, skin and muscle from another part of the body can be used to replace the scalp, neck, tongue and throat.

Medical Oncology
Chemotherapy, often in combination with radiation therapy, is used to treat head and neck cancers as well. Chemotherapy enhances the effectiveness of radiation therapy and improves control rates for advanced cancers compared to radiation alone. The Temple Cancer Center’s multidisciplinary Head & Neck group offers chemotherapy options for patients in all stages of disease.

Radiation Therapy
Radiation therapy alone or in combination with chemotherapy is standard treatment for many patients with head and neck cancers. The treatment approach chosen depends on many tumor factors.

Temple University Hospital has one of the most advanced radiation therapy programs in the region, with experienced radiation oncologists and the latest technology, including: intensity-modulated radiation therapy (IMRT); volumetric arc radiation therapy (VMAT); image guided radiation therapy (IGRT); hyperthermia; high dose-rate radioactive implants; and 3D conformal radiation therapy.

Support Services
From diagnosis to treatment to recovery, a patient’s fight against head and neck cancer can be challenging. The anxiety that can come with managing this disease often calls for support. Temple University Hospital provides every patient with the resources he or she needs to meet the psychological, social and physical challenges related to head and neck cancer and its treatment.

Support services include:

- **Support groups** – Head & Neck cancer support group
- **Speech language therapy** – trained therapists help patients manage issues with functions such as swallowing, speech and communication
- **Psychosocial support** – social workers and other experts can help with community resource referral, coping with illness, family and relationship concerns, employment issues, and financial or insurance needs
- **Nutritional counseling** – provided by registered dietitians with specific experience in oncology to help patients understand and meet their nutritional needs

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT TEMPLE’S HEAD & NECK CANCER PROGRAM, CALL 1-800-TempleMed (836-7536)