

THYROID CANCER

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Thyroid cancer is the most common form of cancer in the endocrine system, which includes the glands that produce hormones in your body. Cancer occurs when lumps, or nodules, grow in the thyroid gland. These nodules are not usually cancerous, but if they are, they can be treated effectively. Rarely, they can be life threatening.

Visit hormone.org for more information.



The thyroid gland is a butterfly shaped gland at the front of the neck. It uses iodine, a mineral found in some foods and in iodized salt, to make hormones that help your body. The thyroid hormones control your metabolism and affect your weight and your brain function as well as maintaining your heart, skin, hair, and intestines.



THYROID NODULES

— CELLS IN THE THYROID THAT FORM A TUMOR

- More than 90% are not harmful, but some can be cancerous
- Fewer than 1 in 10 nodules is cancerous
- Signs of thyroid cancer include a swelling or lump in the neck
- Your doctor can detect nodules with a “neck check.” Cancer is confirmed with a fine needle biopsy or by testing a nodule removed by surgery.



THYROID CANCER DOESN'T ALWAYS HAVE SYMPTOMS

See your doctor if you notice:

- a lump or swelling in your neck
- a hoarse voice
- difficulty swallowing
- neck or throat pain
- a swollen lymph node in your neck

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Sources: American Cancer Society and National Institutes of Health



Hormone Health
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FROM THE ENDOCRINE SOCIETY

CANCER DIAGNOSIS

Tests that examine the thyroid, neck, and blood are used to detect (find) and diagnose thyroid cancer.

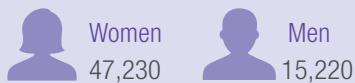
TYPES OF THYROID CANCERS

- **Papillary:** the most common (80% of cases); slow growing; may develop in one or both lobes of the thyroid gland; and may spread to lymph nodes in the neck.
- **Follicular:** the 2nd most common; found more in countries with lack of iodine; grows slowly and is highly treatable.
- **Medullary:** less common; more likely to run in families; more likely to spread to lymph nodes and other organs.
- **Anaplastic:** very rare and very aggressive; quickly spreads to other parts of the neck and body.

THYROID CANCER IS THE #1 FASTEST GROWING CANCER IN THE U.S.

(IN BOTH MEN AND WOMEN)

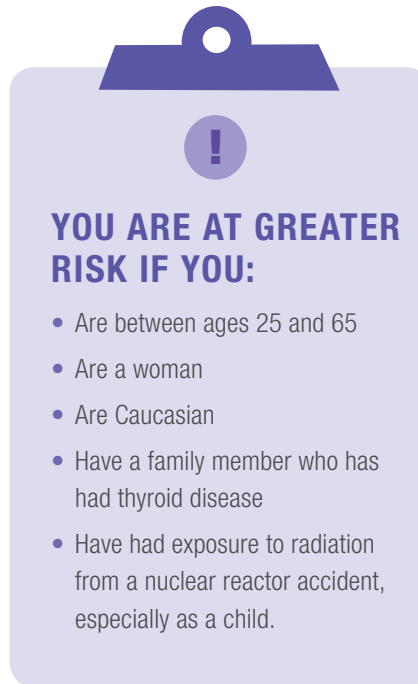
New cases per year: 62,450



Occurs nearly 3 times more often in women than in men. Can occur at any age (including in children). Seen most often in women in their 40s and 50s and men in their 60s and 70s.

2 out of 3 cases occur in people younger than age 55.

...Age, gender, and exposure to radiation can affect the risk.



YOU ARE AT GREATER RISK IF YOU:

- Are between ages 25 and 65
- Are a woman
- Are Caucasian
- Have a family member who has had thyroid disease
- Have had exposure to radiation from a nuclear reactor accident, especially as a child.



TREATMENT

Doctors remove the thyroid gland and the nodules within it with a surgical operation. Your doctor may also provide a one-time treatment with a radioactive iodine pill that you swallow. This is a single dose and not like radiation used in other cancers. You will need to be on thyroid hormone therapy for the rest of your life. If your cancer is quite advanced (less than 5% of patients), your doctor may provide chemo therapy.

With any cancer diagnosis, look to your family, friends, and healthcare providers for more support.

Patients have questions. We have answers.

The Hormone Health Network is your trusted source for endocrine patient education. Our free, online resources are available at hormone.org.



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