Head and neck cancers account for about 4% of cancers in the U.S.

About 70% of oropharyngeal cancers, one type of head and neck cancer, are caused by HPV.

Oropharynx – back of the throat, including the base of the tongue and tonsils

Cancer usually comes from multiple mutations over a lifetime, not a single one.

Researchers are studying genetic changes in cancer cells. This study is called cancer genomics.

The study of head and neck cancer genomics is geared toward finding more effective treatments.

Genomics, Mutations and Treatment Options for Head and Neck Cancer

Risk factors for head and neck cancer include:
- smoking or other tobacco use
- human papillomavirus (HPV) infection

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Mutations and Treatment Options for Head and Neck Cancer

New approaches to treatment

Thanks to genomics, innovative treatments for head and neck cancer are being developed. These include:
- Precision medicine – the use of targeted therapies for a person’s specific head and neck cancer
- Immunotherapy – treatments that activate the immune system to attack head and neck cancer cells

Early detection is key to surviving head and neck cancer.

Look for:
- a mouth sore that won’t heal
- a lump in the neck, jaw or mouth
- pain or weakness in the face
- neck pain
- difficulty moving the jaw
- difficulty swallowing
- speech problems
- ear pain or hearing loss
- trouble breathing
- a sore throat that doesn’t go away
- white or red patches in the mouth or throat
- weight loss

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