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Head & Neck



The Head and Neck team with the TomoTherapy ^[1] treatment machine.

UCSF offers comprehensive treatment for cancers of the head and neck. We understand the nature of this disease and the special issues faced by head and neck cancer patients.

At your first consultation visit, you will meet with your radiation oncologist. This appointment will take approximately one to two hours. A comprehensive medical examination and medical

history will be taken. At that appointment, your physician may additionally perform an examination using a fiberoptic scope to examine the area inside of your nasal passages to your throat. This is done using a small amount of a local numbing medication so that it is more comfortable. Most patients tolerate this very well. You will also meet other members of your radiation oncology team such as your resident physician or the Head and Neck Nurse, Joyce Tang, RN, BSN.

Before you start your treatment, it is important to know if you will need to be seen in our Oral Medicine Clinic. Good oral hygiene is important before you start radiation treatments. This appointment is like going to a specialized dentist. Depending on where your radiation treatment will be directed, sometimes the oral medicine physician will prescribe fluoride treatments (mouth rinses) or advise of other care needed (like dental cleaning, extraction of decayed teeth, etc.). The most common side effects of head and neck radiation treatment include dry mouth (xerostomia) and skin changes (redness or tanning) in the treatment area.



LINAC machine for Head & Neck treatments

Your physician will create a radiation treatment plan that is just for you. The latest research data is applied to create an optimal, individually customized plan for your care. During your planning session, a plastic mask may be created. This is utilized to help in your positioning and remind you to stay still during the actual treatment. It is made of a light-weight, mesh plastic material. Once you start your treatment, you will see your physician weekly. However, your radiation oncology team members are available daily to help you through your care should you have any questions (resident physician, nurses, and radiation therapists).

Many other services are available to the patients receiving care at UCSF. These services include movement classes, art therapy, educational lectures, support groups, social workers and nutrition counseling. Most services are provided free of charge. Please ask about our services! We are happy to be involved in your total care!

Helpful UCSF Internet Site:

UCSF Head & Neck Cancer.....<http://ohns.ucsf.edu/> [2]

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UCSF Main Site

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Source URL: <https://radonc.ucsf.edu/head-neck>

Links

[1] <https://radonc.ucsf.edu/tomotherapy>

[2] <http://ohns.ucsf.edu/>