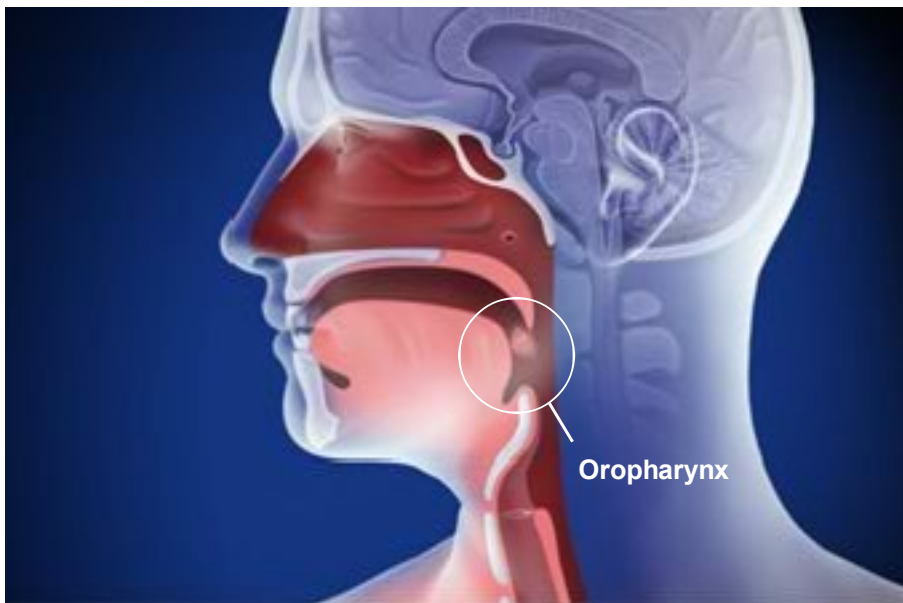


## Oropharyngeal Cancer



### Overview

This disease is a cancer of the oropharynx, the middle part of the throat. The oropharynx includes the back portion of the tongue, the soft palate, the side and back walls of the throat, and the tonsils. If left untreated, these cancerous cells can spread to other parts of the body.

### Causes

Oropharyngeal cancer is caused by a mutation in the genes of cells in the oropharynx, resulting in abnormal cells that grow and reproduce rapidly to form a tumor. Risk factors include tobacco use, heavy alcohol use, a poor diet, and exposure to the human papilloma virus (HPV).

### Symptoms

Symptoms may include unexplained soreness in the throat that does not go away, pain in the throat or ear, pain when swallowing, and a lump in the back of the mouth, throat or neck. It may also cause coughing, weight loss, a change in the voice, and a dull pain behind the breastbone.

### Treatment

Treatment options depend on the stage of the cancer and the patient's age and condition. Treatment methods may include surgery to remove the cancer, radiation therapy and chemotherapy. Regular follow up exams are necessary.

