

Thyroid cancer: assessment and management

Information for the public

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Thyroid cancer: the care you should expect

Thyroid cancer is a rare type of cancer that affects the thyroid gland, a gland at the base of the neck that makes and releases hormones. Thyroid cancer can affect anyone, but is rare in children and is 2 to 3 times more likely to affect women than men. There are about 3,900 new cases of thyroid cancer in the UK each year.

Thyroid cancer is treatable and, in many cases, can be cured completely, although it can sometimes come back after treatment.

We want this guideline to make a difference to people with thyroid cancer by making sure:

- if thyroid cancer is suspected, you are offered the right tests to confirm it and to help you make decisions about your treatment
- you are offered the right treatment depending on the type and severity of your cancer and only if you need it
- you and your family are given information and support that puts you at the centre of decisions about tests and treatment for thyroid cancer
- you understand your treatment options, including surgery and treatment with radioactive iodine
- you know what your long-term treatment options are and whether you will need to have regular follow-up appointments.

Making decisions together

Decisions about treatment and care are best when they are made together. Your health professionals should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns.

To help you make decisions, think about:

- What matters most to you; what do you want to get out of any treatment?
- What are you most worried about; are there risks or downsides to the treatment that worry you more than others?
- How will the treatment affect your day-to-day life?
- What happens if you do not want to have treatment?

If you need more support to understand the information you are given, tell your health professional.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

Where can I find out more?

The [NHS website](#) has more information about thyroid cancer.

The organisations below can give you more advice and support:

- [British Thyroid Foundation](#), 01423 810 093
- [Butterfly Thyroid Cancer Trust](#), 07399564463
- [Cancer Research](#), 0808 800 4040 or cancer.info@cancer.org.uk

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by thyroid cancer and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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