

Head & Neck Cancer with Dr. Jack Russo

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Hi, my name is Jack Russo and I'm an ear, nose, throat doctor, and head and neck surgeon at ENT and Allergy Associates in Brooklyn Heights. I wanted to talk to you a little bit about the symptoms of head and neck cancer. Head and neck cancer are those cancers that occur in the head and neck region or in the glands of the neck. Obviously, those parts of the body are important for vital senses like smell, taste and talking. It's important to pick up on head and neck cancers early before they start affecting these functions. Any lesions in the mouth, in the gums, or on the tongue that are present for more than a couple weeks should be examined and potentially biopsied. Tumors that occur further back in the very back part of the tongue around the throat may not be visible, but they can cause symptoms such as pain, difficulty swallowing, change in the voice. Those would also be reasons to seek evaluation. The main risk factors for head and neck cancer are smoking and heavy drinking, but even for patients who do not engage in those activities, we now know that exposure to a virus called HPV or human papilloma virus, which essentially everyone is exposed to, is a risk factor for cancer. If you feel like you have any signs or symptoms of head and neck cancer, make sure you schedule an appointment for evaluation.

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