

THYROID CANCER FACT SHEET

What is Thyroid cancer?

Thyroid cancer starts in the thyroid gland, a small butterfly-shaped gland in the front of the neck. The thyroid gland helps control body functions such as growth, energy, and metabolism. Many thyroid cancers can be treated successfully, especially when found early.

Thyroid cancer in the world and in Sri Lanka

According to GLOBOCAN 2022; more than 800,000 cases have been newly diagnosed and more than 47,000 deaths have been reported. Thyroid cancer affects both women and men in Sri Lanka but the incidence is higher among the female population. Thyroid cancer is a highly treatable cancer if diagnosed early and managed properly. Which is a reason for a lower death rate.

Prevention

- There is no exact method for prevention.
- Avoid unnecessary radiation exposure when possible.
- Seek medical advice for neck lumps or swellings.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle with a balanced diet and regular exercise.
- Attend medical check-ups if you have a family history of thyroid disease.

Early Detection

Early detection improves the chance of successful treatment. People should seek medical advice if they notice changes in the neck or voice.

- Do not ignore a lump or swelling in the neck.
- Seek medical attention for persistent hoarseness or difficulty in swallowing.
- Regular medical follow-up may be needed for people with thyroid problems.

Signs and Symptoms

- A lump or swelling in the neck
- Hoarseness or changes in the voice
- Difficulty swallowing
- Difficulty breathing
- Pain in the neck or throat
- Swollen lymph nodes in the neck
- Persistent cough not related to a cold

Diagnosis

- Medical examination by a doctor
- Ultrasound scan of the thyroid gland
- Fine needle aspiration test (FNAC)
- Blood tests
- CT scan or other imaging tests if needed



Treatment

Treatment depends on the type and stage of thyroid cancer.

- Surgery to remove part or all of the thyroid gland
- Radioactive iodine treatment
- Radiotherapy
- Targeted medicines in selected patients
- Regular follow-up and hormone replacement treatment

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation helps patients recover physically and emotionally after treatment. Support may include nutrition advice, speech support, counselling, and follow-up care.

Palliative Care

Palliative care helps improve comfort and quality of life for patients with advanced cancer. It helps manage pain, symptoms, and emotional stress.

Survivorship

Many people live long and healthy lives after thyroid cancer treatment. Regular follow-up visits are important to monitor health.

Services Available in Sri Lanka

- Cancer Early Detection Centres
- Surgical/ ENT Clinics in Government hospitals
- Cancer treatment centres including National Cancer Institute Sri Lanka (Apeksha Hospital)
- palliative care clinics
- National Cancer Control Programme awareness and support services

Contact Details

Address: National Cancer Control Programme,
555/5, Public Health Complex, Elvitigala Mawatha,
Colombo 05, Sri Lanka

Telephone: +94 11 2368627

Website: www.nccp.health.gov.lk

Email: nccpmohsl@gmail.com

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/NCCPSL>

Cancer Early Detection Centre

Address: Ground Floor
Infectious Diseases Unit, OPD Complex,
National Hospital Colombo Sri Lanka

Telephone: 011 315 9227

