



FACTS ABOUT

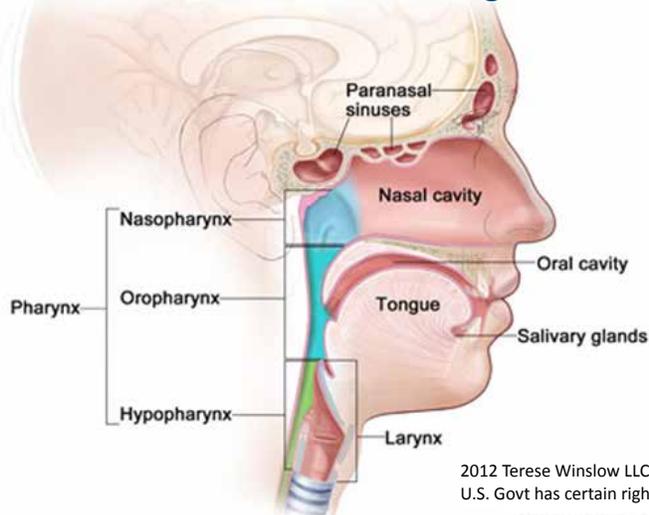
# Head & Neck Cancer in Idaho

Head and neck cancer refers to a group of biologically similar cancers that start in the lip, oral cavity, nasal cavity, paranasal sinuses, pharynx, and larynx. Ninety percent of head and neck cancers are squamous cell carcinomas (HNSCC).

Alcohol and tobacco use, including smokeless tobacco, are the two most important risk factors for head and neck cancers, especially cancers of the oral cavity, oropharynx, hypopharynx, and larynx. **The risk of combined exposure to tobacco and alcohol is synergistic.**

## Head and Neck Cancer Anatomy

### Head and Neck Cancer Regions



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This picture illustrates location of paranasal sinuses, nasal cavity, oral cavity, tongue, salivary glands, larynx, and pharynx (including nasopharynx, oropharynx, and hypopharynx.)

Cancers of the brain, eyes, the esophagus, the thyroid gland as well as those of the scalp, skin, muscles, and bones of the head and neck are not usually classified as head and neck cancers.

	Male Incidence		Male Mortality		Female Incidence		Female Mortality	
	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count
Head & Neck Cancers	23.4	905	5.2	199	9.2	380	1.9	79
Oral Cavity	12.0	457	2.0	76	5.2	210	0.9	39
Pharynx	4.5	184	1.2	47	1.0	43	0.4	18
Larynx	4.4	171	1.3	50	1.1	46	0.3	12
Paranasal Sinuses & Nasal Cavity	1.0	39	0.3	10	0.7	31	0.1	3
Salivary Glands	1.5	54	0.5	16	1.2	50	0.2	7
Head & Neck Squamous Cell Carcinomas	20.6	798	n/a	n/a	6.8	279	n/a	n/a

Rates are per 100,000 and age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. population standard

## Rates 2007-2011

Incidence rates of head and neck cancers are about twice as high for men as for women. Rates of head and neck cancer increase with age, particularly after 50 years old. Most patients are between 50-70 years of age.



# Head & Neck Cancer in Idaho

## Risk Factors

It is estimated that tobacco and alcohol use account for at least 75% of head and neck cancers. Cigarette smokers have a lifetime increased risk for head and neck cancers that is 5- to 25-fold higher than among the general population.

Please also see the *Cancer and Tobacco Fact Sheet*: [www.ccaidaho.org](http://www.ccaidaho.org)

	Smoking	Smokeless Tobacco	Heavy Alcohol Use
State of Idaho	16.4%	4.9%	5.7%
Public Health District 1	15.1%	6.7%	4.9%
Public Health District 2	14.5%	6.7%	9.1%
Public Health District 3	15.8%	7.0%	5.5%
Public Health District 4	19.1%	2.0%	5.5%
Public Health District 5	20.4%	7.0%	6.2%
Public Health District 6	18.3%	3.5%	6.4%
Public Health District 7	8.6%	4.9%	4.4%

Source: Idaho Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Idaho Dept. of Health and Welfare

Infection with cancer-causing types of human papillomavirus (HPV), especially HPV-16, is a risk factor for some types of head and neck cancers, particularly oropharyngeal cancers that involve the tonsils or the base of the tongue. In the U.S., the incidence of oropharyngeal cancers caused by HPV infection is increasing, while the incidence of oropharyngeal cancers related to other causes is falling. It is expected that HPV vaccines will reduce the risk of HPV-induced head and neck cancer.

Please also see the *HPV and Cancer fact Sheet*: [www.ccaidaho.org](http://www.ccaidaho.org)

## Cancer Disparities

In the U.S., incidence rates of head and neck cancer are higher for blacks. In Idaho, non-Hispanic whites had significantly higher rates than Hispanics or American Indian/Alaska Natives. Persons residing in areas with lower socioeconomic status (SES), such as with lower percentages of adults with college degrees or higher rates of uninsured, have higher incidence rates of head and neck cancer, likely due to the correlation between SES and major risk factors.

**Regular dental examinations may identify pre-cancerous lesions in the oral cavity.**

## CCAI Objectives

- Reduce the oropharyngeal cancer death rate
- Reduce the use of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products
- Reduce tobacco use by adolescents

## Call to Action

- Educate patients on the increased risks for oral cancer with tobacco and alcohol use
- Counsel patients to quit tobacco and assist them to find quit resources
- Become a champion for effective tobacco prevention and cessation programs, which support tobacco-free lifestyles
- Join CCAI and the Tobacco Free Idaho Alliance and work toward a tobacco-free and healthier Idaho
- Advise all patients to have a yearly physical examination of the head and neck with their primary care physician, and a yearly dental evaluation



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Comprehensive Cancer Alliance for Idaho: [www.ccaidaho.org](http://www.ccaidaho.org)  
Tobacco Free Idaho Alliance: [www.projectfilter.org](http://www.projectfilter.org)

All references available through the Department of Health and Welfare