



PATIENT INFORMATION

Adult Neck Mass Follow-up

QUESTION

ANSWER

Why do I need to know about my neck mass?

A neck mass is an abnormal lump in the neck. A neck mass may be caused by infection, benign tumor, or a cancerous tumor. A neck mass from infection should go away completely when the infection goes away. If it does not, your healthcare provider will help you to choose tests to determine the cause of your neck mass.

What should I do?

- If you were given antibiotics, take them as prescribed.
- Once each week, check the size of the neck mass using your fingertips.
- Follow up with your provider to be sure that the neck mass decreases in size over time.
- Be sure to follow through with any tests your provider ordered.

How do I check the size of my neck mass?

Once each week use your fingertips to check the size of the mass. How wide is the mass? One fingertip wide? Two fingertips wide? How does that compare to the size last time you checked? The mass should get smaller over time. A mass due to infection should go away completely typically in 2 or 3 weeks.

Contact your provider if:

- The mass gets larger
- The mass does not go away completely.
- The mass goes away but then comes back

What else should I look for?

Notify your provider if you have:

- Difficulty or pain with swallowing
- Neck pain or throat pain
- Mouth sores or tooth pain
- Ear pain or hearing loss on the same side as the lump in your neck
- Change in voice
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fever over 101 degrees Fahrenheit

How should I follow up with my provider?

You and your provider may stay in contact by phone, through electronic messages, by mail, or in person at the provider's office. You may need to go back to your provider's office for a repeat examination.

No matter how you follow up with your provider, be sure that the mass has gone away. If the mass does not go away, your provider will help you decide what to do next.

SOURCE: Pynnonen, MA, Gillespie, MB, Rosenfeld RM, et al. Clinical Practice Guideline: Evaluation of the Neck Mass in Adult. *Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg.* 2017; 157(2 Suppl):S1-S30.



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
OTOLARYNGOLOGY-
HEAD AND NECK SURGERY

FOUNDATION

www.entnet.org

ABOUT THE AAO-HNS/F

The American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (www.entnet.org), one of the oldest medical associations in the nation, represents about 12,000 physicians and allied health professionals who specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the ears, nose, throat and related structures of the head and neck. The Academy serves its members by facilitating the advancement of the science and art of medicine related to otolaryngology and by representing the specialty in governmental and socioeconomic issues. The AAO-HNS Foundation works to advance the art, science, and ethical practice of otolaryngology-head and neck surgery through education, research, and lifelong learning. The organization's vision: "Empowering otolaryngology-head and neck surgeons to deliver the best patient care."