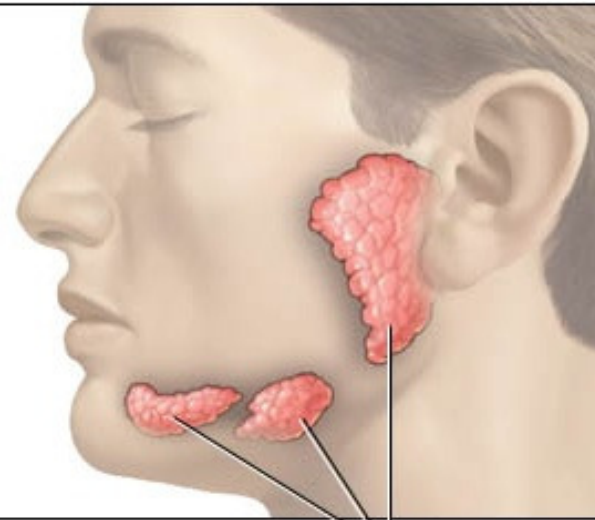


Side Effects of Head and Neck Radiation



Salivary glands

Radiation to the saliva glands causes a dry mouth, thicker mucus and changes in tastes (using oral saliva substitutes, Salivart, Salagen, Biotene, Oasis, Stoppers4, sugar-free lozenges etc. are helpful and seasoning food differently may help. Some patients have such thick, stringy mucus they need a suction machine to clean out their throat

Sun burned reaction of the skin is common (Biafine, Sween, Aloe, Cortisone or Silvadene.)

Teeth problems can occur so good dental evaluation prior to radiation is important and good oral hygiene afterwards with frequent mouth washing, teeth brushing and fluoride treatments. Teeth that need to be extracted should be removed before radiation rather than after.

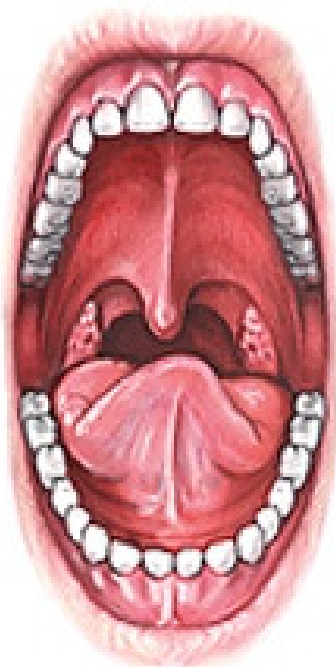
Some patients develop laryngitis or hoarseness but this is temporary.

Sore throat and problems swallowing are quite common (medication to treat fungal infections and inflamed tissue e.g. Magic Mouthwash, Nystatin, Diflucan tabs can be used,

For fever blisters: Acyclovir (200mg/susp 5x/d for 10d) or 400mg bid can be used

For pain elixir of Tylenol with codeine or Lortab elixir may be all that is necessary for more severe pain the Duragesic skin patches are good since they work around the clock

Some people have so much trouble keeping their weight up that they need a feeding tube inserted into the stomach, gastrostomy tube or PEG tube. Other patients are able to get through by pushing Boost or Ensure.) Also eat or drink lots of soups, gravy, sauces, and even popsicles.



More information on the web at:
www.wellspingoncology.org