

Papillary Thyroid Cancer

Symptoms, Treatments, and Prognosis for Papillary Thyroid Carcinoma

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Papillary thyroid cancer (also sometimes called papillary thyroid carcinoma) is the most common type of thyroid cancer. You may have even heard your doctor talk about metastatic papillary thyroid cancer ("metastatic" means that it has spread beyond your thyroid gland). This article will focus on papillary thyroid cancer basics, including papillary thyroid cancer symptoms, treatments, and prognosis.

Papillary thyroid carcinoma is the most common thyroid cancer. About 80% of all thyroid cancers cases are papillary thyroid cancer.¹

Most commonly, papillary thyroid cancers are totally asymptomatic. However, the most common symptom is a mass in the neck. Papillary carcinoma typically arises as a solid, irregular or cystic mass that comes from otherwise normal thyroid tissue. This type of cancer has a high cure rate—10-year survival rates for all patients with papillary thyroid cancer estimated at over 90%. Cervical metastasis (spread to lymph nodes in the neck) are present in 50% of small papillary carcinomas and in more than 75% of the larger papillary thyroid carcinomas.

The presence of lymph node metastasis in the neck area typically has a more frequent recurrence rate but not a higher mortality rate. Distant spread of papillary thyroid cancer is called metastasis. Distant metastasis of papillary thyroid cancer is uncommon, but when it does occur, it may spread to the lungs, liver, and bone. Papillary thyroid cancers that invade the surrounding tissues next to the thyroid gland have a much worse prognosis because of a high local recurrence rate.