



Prevention

Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Month April 2019

HEAD AND NECK CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

PREVENTION OF HEAD AND NECK CANCERS

Attacking the risk factors: Environmental exposures, not known gene mutations, **cause most** head and neck cancers. **Tobacco and alcohol** are long-known risk factors. **Cigarette smoking** increases the risk from **5- to 25-fold**, although it falls to near normal 20 years after cessation.¹ Reducing their abuse, despite ongoing efforts and novel tactics, is slow work.

However, **eliminating human papilloma virus (HPV)**, which **increases** the risk of **oropharyngeal cancers** about **15-fold**, is within reach. The HPV vaccine has made elimination of HPV a realistic possibility. The results would not be confined to head and neck cancer, since HPV causes most cervical and anal cancers. For example, one sophisticated modeling study estimated that widespread vaccination combined with **HPV-based screening could avert 12.5-13.4 million cases of cervical cancer by 2069**.² Epidemiology and treatment of H&N cancers has been recently reviewed.³

PRIMARY PREVENTION: HPV VACCINATION

About **2/3 of oropharyngeal cancers (OPCs)** in advanced countries are **caused** by HPV.⁴ The rate of OPCs **increased by 225% from 1984 to 2004**⁵ and is now **more common than cervical cancer**.

HPV-associated OPC has a better prognosis (median survival 130 months vs 20 months).

The effect on OPC of HPV vaccine has not been directly tested. However, a trial in Costa Rica found it **highly effective in preventing oral HPV16 and 18 infection**⁶, and oral HPV infection was **about 90% lower in vaccinated** vs. unvaccinated Americans.⁷

SECONDARY PREVENTION: SCREENING

Unfortunately, **screening for head and neck cancers has not been effective**. There is no evidence that screening has reduced mortality for head and neck cancers, definition of an appropriate screening population or a risk-based screening protocol. The largest **trial of visual inspection of patients** with significant tobacco and alcohol exposures in India did not find an overall reduced mortality, but did find benefit in males (RR 0.60, 95% CI 0.4-0.9).⁸ It seems prudent to perform visual inspections on heavy smokers and alcohol users.

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The Strang Cancer Prevention Cookbook

Root Vegetable Lasagna

Reduce your Risk for Cancer by Eating a Healthy Diet!

Serve as a colorful nutritious entrée or a vegetable side dish

Use a mandolin to produce uniform thin slices of the root vegetables

6 Servings

2 ancho chiles

1 ½ cups vegetable stock or low-sodium canned broth

1 teaspoon olive oil

2 large baking potatoes (about 1 pound), peeled and sliced lengthwise 1/8 inch thick

2 medium sweet potatoes (about 14 ounces), peeled and sliced lengthwise 1/8 inch thick

2 medium parsnips (about ½ pound), peeled and sliced lengthwise 1/8 inch thick

3 medium turnips (about ¾ pound), peeled and sliced 1/8 inch thick

salt

¾ cup diced roasted peppers, drained if jarred

2 cups shredded low-fat cheddar or Monterey Jack-cheese (about ½ pound)

Preheat the oven to 375 F

In a small saucepan, simmer the ancho chilies in the stock for 10 minutes. Turn off heat and let steep while you prepare the lasagna. Rub a casserole or baking pan (about 3-quart) with the olive oil. Arrange the root vegetable slices in the pan starting with a layer of slightly overlapping potatoes, followed by sweet potatoes, parsnip, and turnips; repeat the sequence.

Season each layer with salt to taste and sprinkle with diced roasted pepper and shredded cheese, reserving about 1/3 cup of shredded cheese. Strain the stock, discarding the chiles, and pour evenly over the casserole. Cover with foil and bake for 50 minutes. Remove the foil, sprinkle with the reserved cheese, and bake for 15 more minutes. Let cool for 15 minutes before serving.

High in Fiber-20 percent of the daily requirement

Calories 285

Protein 13 g

Carbohydrates 41g

Fat 8 g

Cholesterol 0 mg

Dietary Fiber 5 g

Saturated Fat 1 g

Recipe Laura Pensiero, R.D., [Strang](#) Nutrition Consultant

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THIS NEWSLETTER IS DEDICATED TO FRANCIS OSBORNE



April is Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Month



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