Neck Mass/Adenopathy

A person with a neck mass (abnormal lump) or adenopathy (swollen lymph nodes) may have imaging tests to determine if it is a normal structure or cancer.

For neck masses that cannot be felt and are not in the parotid (salivary) gland region or thyroid, ultrasound, CT without or with intravenous (IV) contrast or MRI without and with IV contrast of the neck may all be appropriate.

For neck masses that can be felt and are not in the parotid region or the thyroid, ultrasound (https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/us-thyroid) , CT (https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/bodyct) without and with IV contrast and MRI (https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/bodymr) without and with IV contrast of the neck, in addition to CT scan of the arteries (https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/angioct) and MRI of the arteries (https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/angiomr) , may all be appropriate.

For neck masses in the parotid region, MRI without and with IV contrast, CT without and with IV contrast, MRI without and with IV contrast, and ultrasound of the neck and parotid or salivary glands may all be appropriate.

For children with neck masses not in the parotid region or thyroid, CT (https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/pedia-ct) with IV contrast, MRI (https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/pediatric-mri) without and with IV contrast, and ultrasound of the neck may all be appropriate.

For more information, see the Head and Neck Cancer (https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/hdneck) page.

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