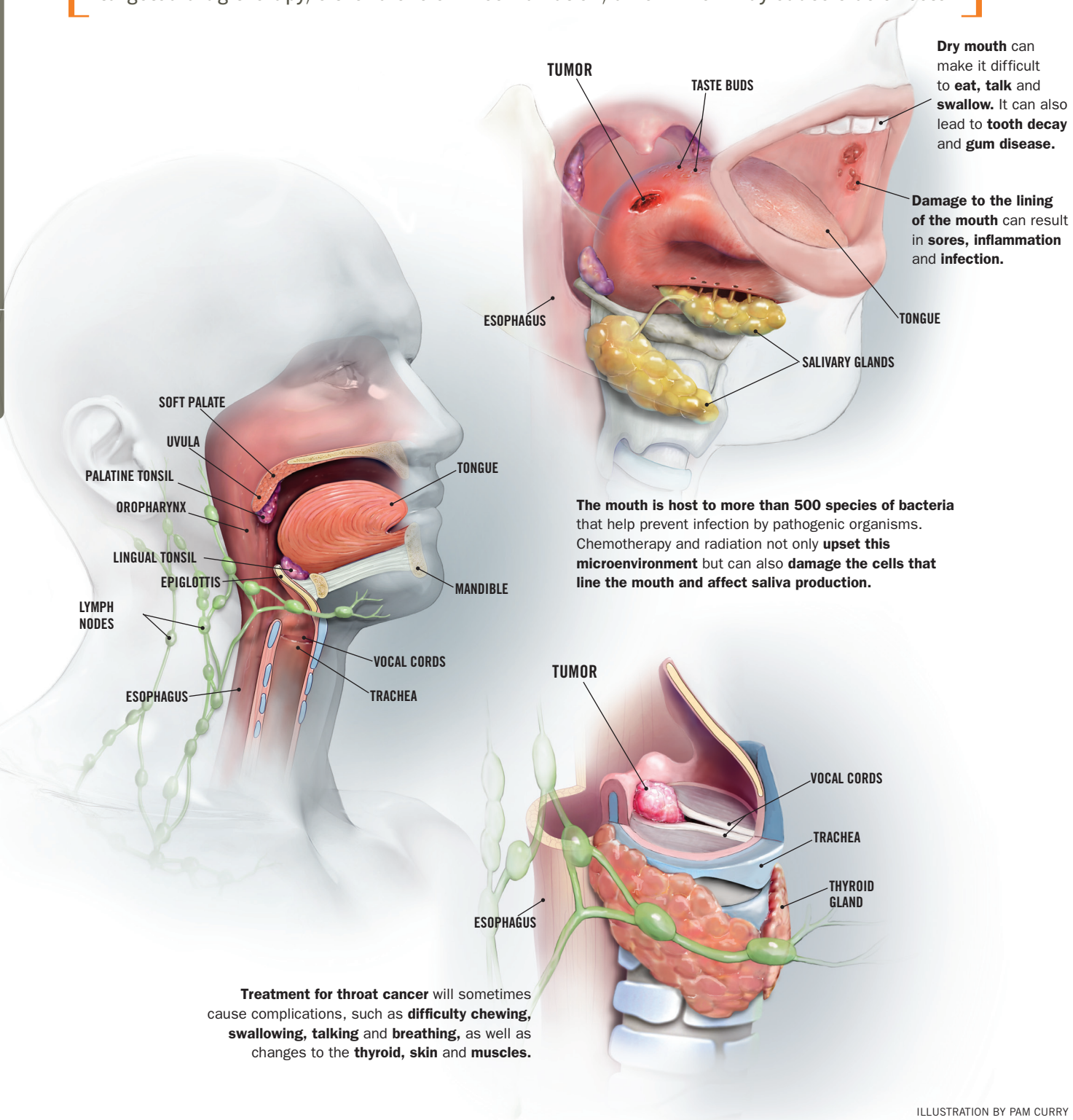


# Complications of the Mouth and Throat

Most cancers of the head and neck are treated with surgery, radiation, chemotherapy and targeted drug therapy, either alone or in combination, all of which may cause side effects.



**Dry mouth** can make it difficult to **eat, talk** and **swallow**. It can also lead to **tooth decay** and **gum disease**.

**Damage to the lining of the mouth** can result in **sores, inflammation** and **infection**.

The mouth is host to more than **500 species of bacteria** that help prevent infection by pathogenic organisms. Chemotherapy and radiation not only **upset this microenvironment** but can also **damage the cells that line the mouth and affect saliva production**.

**Treatment for throat cancer** will sometimes cause complications, such as **difficulty chewing, swallowing, talking** and **breathing**, as well as changes to the **thyroid, skin** and **muscles**.