

ETNA :
A GOOD GLANT
OR A HELLISH PRESENCE ?





At nearly 11,000 feet, [Mount Etna](#) in eastern Sicily is one of the world's most active volcanoes. And while the peak erupts at a slow enough rate for people to escape a lava burial, the gentle giant could put people at an increased risk of a different hazard—the development of thyroid cancer.

Those living in the Catania province, where Mount Etna is located, are 2.3 times as likely as those living in the Mediterranean island's eight other non-volcanic provinces to develop papillary [thyroid cancer](#), which is one of the most common forms of thyroid cancer .

Thyroid cancer is a disease that you get when abnormal cells begin to grow in your thyroid gland . The thyroid gland is shaped like a butterfly and is located in the front of your neck. It makes hormones that regulate the way your body uses energy and that help your body work normally.

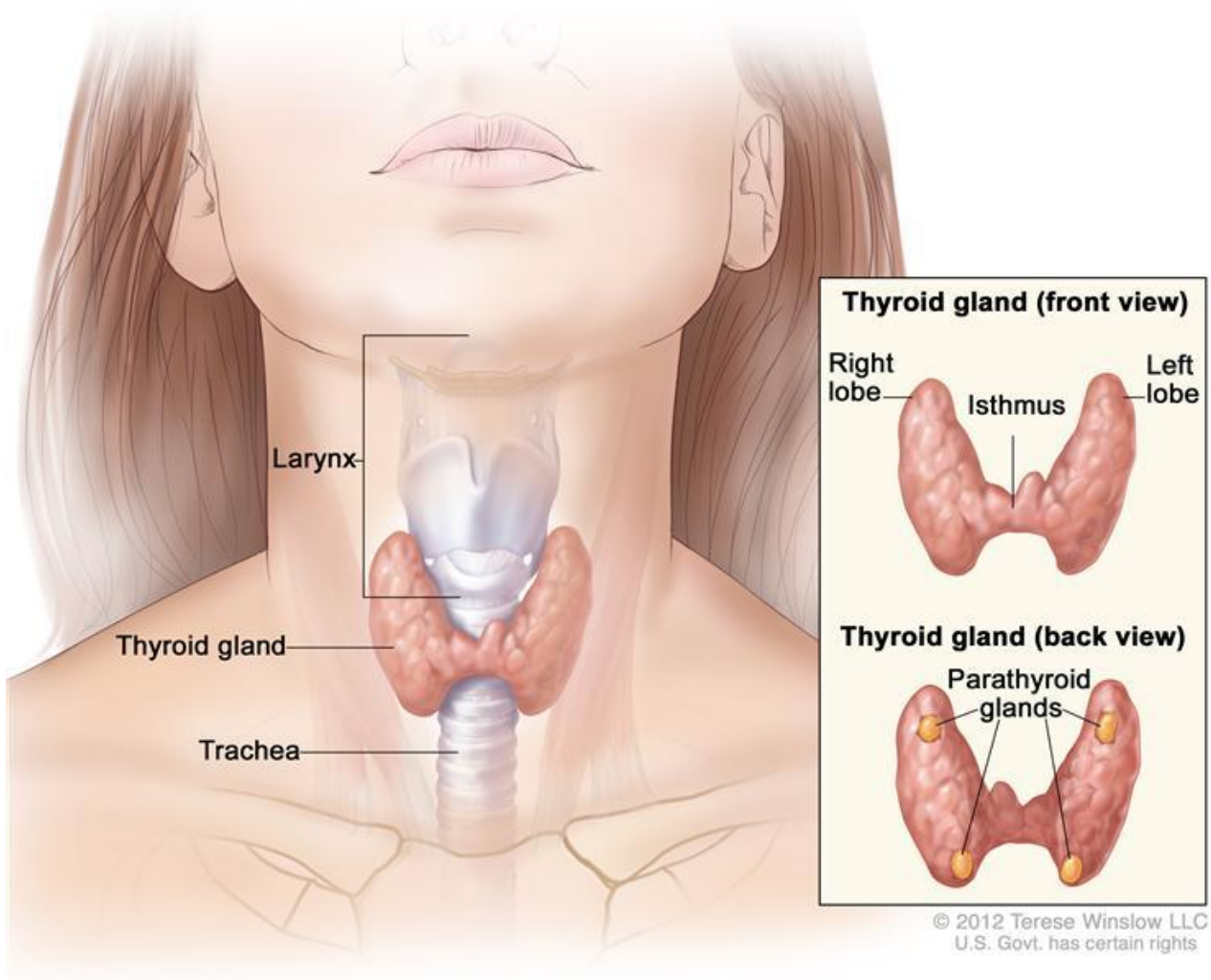
Thyroid cancer is an uncommon type of cancer. Most people who have it do very well, because the cancer is usually found early and the treatments work well. After it is treated, thyroid cancer may come back, sometimes many years after treatment.

Experts don't know what causes thyroid cancer. But like other cancers, changes in the DNA of your cells seem to play a role. These DNA changes may include changes that are inherited as well as those that happen as you get older.

People who have been exposed to a lot of radiation have a greater chance of getting thyroid cancer.

A dental X-ray now and then will not increase your chance of getting thyroid cancer. But past radiation treatment of your head, neck, or chest (especially during childhood) can put you at risk of getting thyroid cancer.

Anatomy of the Thyroid and Parathyroid Glands



Thyroid cancer can cause several symptoms:

- You may get a lump or swelling in your neck. This is the most common symptom.
- You may have pain in your neck and sometimes in your ears.
- You may have trouble swallowing.
- You may have trouble breathing or have constant wheezing.
- Your voice may be hoarse.
- You may have a frequent cough that is not related to a cold.

Sometimes the results of a biopsy are not clear. In this case, you may need surgery to remove all or part of your thyroid gland before you find out if you have thyroid cancer.

The highest average of Thyroid cancer in the world is found in Sicily, near Mount Etna!!!

Another cause of this cancer could be the potable water, coming from the pick of Mount Etna, high in potentially dangerous metals like iron, boron, manganese, Radon and Vanadium. Their levels usually (in the air and even in the water) pass the tolerable concentration. Scientists discovered mainly high quantities of Vanadium, such as in Bronte's potable water.



Other effects of Etna on our health could be:

- Common respiratory symptoms
- Eye symptoms
- Skin irritations

Heavy ash fall may result in the collapse of roofs under the weight of ash and high levels of respirable ash in the air (ash particles less

than 10 microns in diameter). Ash and coarser particles inhaled from within a hot, dense pyroclastic flow or surge, however, almost always results in death from burns or asphyxiation. People exposed to ash fall and subsequent ash-filled air commonly experience various eye, nose, and throat symptoms. Based on historical eruptions, short-term exposures to ash, however, are not known to pose a significant health hazard.

People should avoid unnecessary exposure to ash and wear an effective face mask when outside to reduce inhalation of ash particles. Patients with chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma should take special precaution to avoid exposure to ash particles and be aware that the use of any respirator other than single-use (disposable) respirator may cause additional cardio-pulmonary stress.

Medical services can expect an increase number of patients with respiratory and eye symptoms during and after ash fall. People will generally be very concerned about the effects of ash, and questions usually arise about the content of the ash, particularly regarding the minerals quartz, cristobalite, or tridymite. These are free crystalline silica known to cause silicosis, a disabling and potential fatal lung disease typically found in miners and quarry workers exposed to high concentrations of siliceous dust over long periods of time.

Sicilians don't seem to care much about the risks above mentioned and keep living happily in the shade of their loved volcano which they simply call "*The Mountain*"