Any patient with persistent odynophagia (pain on swallowing), dysphagia (difficulty swallowing), neck swelling, or other symptoms localizing to the head and neck for more than 3 weeks, merits referral to an otolaryngologist or head and neck surgeon specializing in cancer. Subsequent tests can include office nasolaryngoscopy, imaging studies of the head, neck and esophagus (e.g. MRI, barium swallow study), and direct laryngoscopy as needed to evaluate for head and neck cancer.