

# Specimens submitted (Core)

## Reason/Evidentiary Support

### Oropharynx (Figure 1)

The oropharynx is the portion of the continuity of the pharynx extending from the plane of the superior surface of the soft palate to the plane of the superior surface of the hyoid bone or floor of the vallecula.<sup>1</sup> The contents of the oropharynx include:

- soft palate
- palatine tonsils
- anterior and posterior tonsillar pillars
- tonsillar fossa
- uvula
- base of tongue (lingual tonsil)
- vallecula
- posterior oropharyngeal wall
- lateral oropharyngeal wall.

### Nasopharynx (Figure 1)

The nasopharynx is the superior portion of the pharynx and is situated behind the nasal cavity and above the soft palate; it begins anteriorly at the posterior choana and extends along the plane of the airway to the level of the free border of the soft palate.<sup>1</sup> The contents of the nasopharynx include:

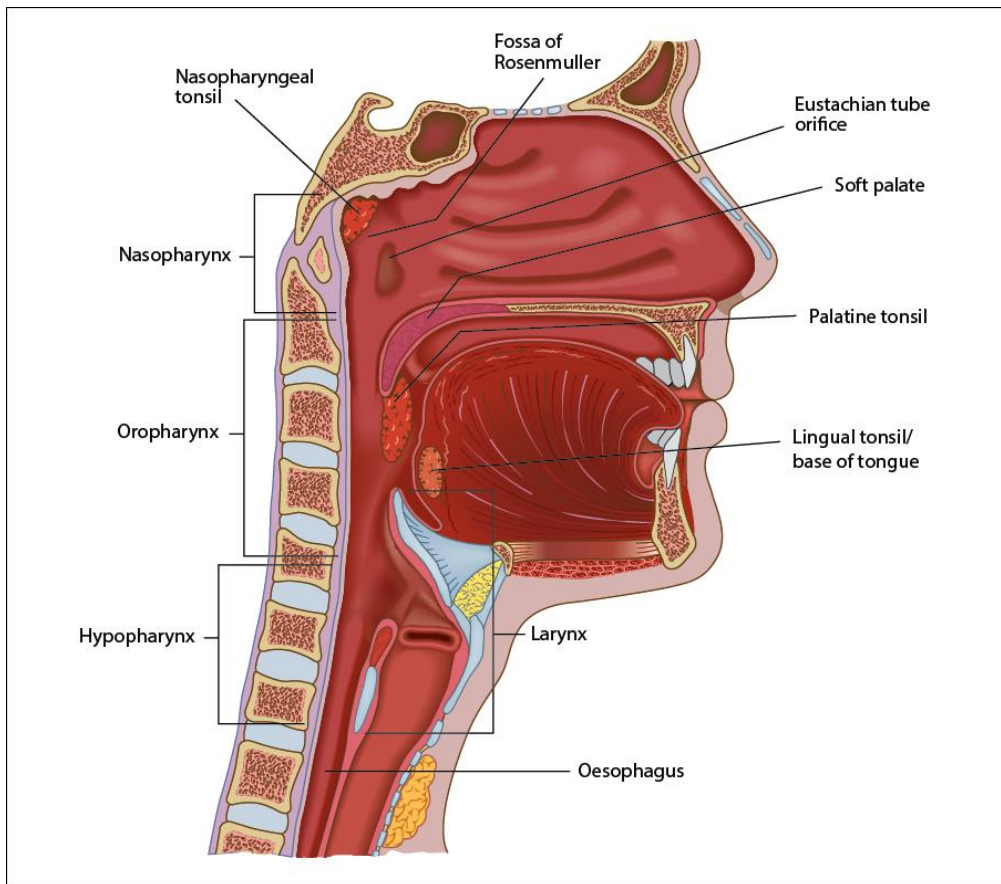
- nasopharyngeal tonsils (adenoids) which lie along the posterior and lateral aspect of the nasopharynx
- orifices of the Eustachian tubes which lie along the lateral aspects of the nasopharyngeal wall
- fossa of Rosenmüller.

### Waldeyer's ring

Waldeyer's ring is formed by a ring or group of extranodal lymphoid tissues at the upper end of the pharynx and consists of the:

- palatine tonsils
- pharyngeal tonsil (adenoids)
- base of tongue/lingual tonsil
- adjacent submucosal lymphatic tissues.

The oropharynx is clearly delineated from the nasopharynx by the soft palate. The inferior portion of the soft palate is oropharyngeal and the superior portion nasopharyngeal. Posteriorly, the nasopharynx extends from the level of the free edge of the soft palate to the skull base.



**Figure 1. Normal anatomy of the pharynx**

## References

- 1 Patel S and Shah JP (2009). Pharynx. In: *AJCC Cancer Staging Manual 7th Edition*, Edge SB, Byrd DR, Carducci MA, Compton CA (eds), Springer, New York, 41-56.