

Treatment

The treatment required for oral cancer will depend on how advanced the cancer is. The earlier it is found, the less invasive the treatment will be and the more successful the outcome.

The three main methods for treating oral cancer are:

- Surgery
- Radiotherapy
- Chemotherapy

Dentists are trained in detecting signs of oral cancer. A regular visit to the dentist can help you keep your mouth and teeth healthy.

It is essential that any warning sign of cancer is checked out immediately.

What should I do if I have any signs of oral cancer?

- Make an appointment to attend your dentist or doctor immediately

If you notice any changes or abnormalities in your mouth, tongue or lips, see a dental professional or doctor immediately

A visit to the dentist is the first line of defence in finding and checking oral cancers

REMEMBER

- X DON'T** delay a visit to the dentist or doctor if you have a sore in your mouth or a lump in your neck
- X AVOID** tobacco smoking
- X AVOID** excessive consumption of alcohol
- X AVOID** excessive sunlight exposure

DO

- ✓** have a regular check-up with a dental professional
- ✓** be aware of any changes in your mouth, tongue or lips
- ✓** reduce the amount of alcohol consumed
- ✓** seek advice to quit or reduce smoking from your doctor, dentist or pharmacist

Quitting smoking

Phone Quitline 137 848 (13 QUIT)



Figure 4:
Cancer of the roof of the mouth

Further information

can be obtained from
Dental Practice Education Research Unit
ARCPOH, School of Dentistry,
The University of Adelaide,
South Australia 5005
Phone (08) 8313 4045 Fax (08) 8313 4858
Website www.arcpoh.adelaide.edu.au/dperu

Oral Cancer

Are you at risk?

Oral Cancer

What is oral cancer?

Oral cancer is a potentially fatal disease that affects many thousands of people each year worldwide. The World Health Organization (2005) has stated that it is the eleventh most prevalent cancer in the world.

In 2006, there were 613 deaths from oral cancer in Australia, which was 0.5% of all deaths.

In Australia, 2,357 new cases of cancer in the mouth were diagnosed during 2005. Currently, the incidence of oral cancer is approximately two-thirds higher among men than women and three times higher among Indigenous Australians than other Australians.

Dentists are trained to recognise early signs of oral cancer. Cancers recognised in early stages usually need less treatment than those identified later.

Where does it develop?

Oral cancer most commonly develops on the lips or tongue and can also occur underneath the tongue, on the cheek, or on the roof of the mouth.



Figure 1:
Cancer of the tongue

Risk factors

- Tobacco smoking (cigarettes, pipes and cigars)
- Excessive consumption of alcohol
- Sunlight exposure (for lip cancer)
- Age (risk increases as age increases)
- Snuff, gutkha, betel quid or areca nut use
- Viral infections e.g. human papilloma virus (HPV) - may be transmitted by oral sex. HPV is also linked with cervical cancer
- Nutritional deficiencies (especially Vitamins A, C and E)
- Genetic predisposition

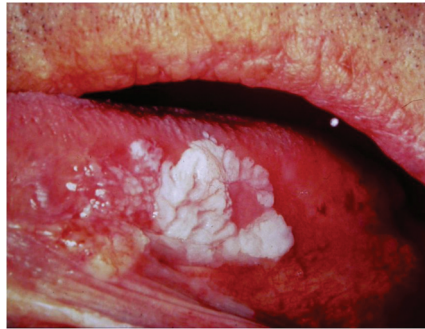


Figure 2:
Cancer of the tongue

Detection of oral cancer

If you notice any changes or abnormalities in your mouth, tongue or lips, see a dental professional or doctor immediately.

Oral cancer signs include:

- Any sore in the mouth, or on the face and neck, that does not heal in two weeks
- Swellings, lumps or bumps on the lips, or anywhere inside the mouth
- White, red or dark patches in the mouth
- Repeated bleeding in the mouth
- Loose teeth

- Difficulty moving the tongue or jaw
- Difficulty or pain when swallowing
- Difficulty wearing dentures
- A lump in the neck
- An earache that doesn't go away
- Numbness, loss of feeling or pain in any areas of the mouth, face or neck
- An abnormal taste in the mouth

If any of these signs apply to you, make an appointment with your dentist or doctor immediately.

Early detection

A visit to the dentist is the first line of defence in both finding and checking oral cancers. A regular dental check-up is not only a good way to keep your teeth healthy but it can also help to detect warning signs of oral cancer in its early stages.



Figure 3:
Cancer of the lip

A regular dental check-up can help detect signs of oral cancer in its early stages

Oral Cancer Oral Cancer Oral Cancer