

ORAL CANCER FACT SHEET

While some may think that oral cancer is rare, mouth cancer will be newly diagnosed in about 100 new individuals each day in the US alone, and a person dies from oral cancer every hour of every day.

When found at early stages of development, oral cancers have a 80-90% survival rate. Unfortunately at this time, the majority are found as late stage cancers, which accounts for very high death rates.

Facts

- Close to 40,000 Americans will be diagnosed with oral or pharyngeal cancers this year.
- It will cause 8000 deaths, killing 1 person per hour, 24 hours per day this year.
- Of the 40,000 new cases only slightly more than half will be alive in 5 years.
- Usually diagnosed in late stages, due to infrequent screening/visits with health professionals.

Risks Factors

- Using **tobacco** in some form, smoke or smokeless, account for 75% of oral cancers in people over the age of 50. A four time's greater risk exists for smokers than non-smokers.
- **Alcohol** use in general elevates your risk for oral cancer.
- **Tobacco** and **heavy alcohol** use have a 15 times greater risk of oral cancer.
- **Human papilloma virus**, particularly HPV16, has a definite and growing link to oral cancers.
- Exposure to **ultraviolet light**, sun, increases the incidence of lip and face cancers.
- A diet low in fruits and vegetables is also being implicated as a factor.

What to do

- Perform a self-exam monthly.
- **See a dentist** that regularly screens for oral cancer at least yearly.
- Adjust your lifestyle to limit risk factors.
- Know your HPV status
- Eat healthy.

What to look for

- Any sore or discolored area of your mouth which does not heal within 14 days.
- White, red, or combination of white/ red patches, which may or may not bleed easily.
- An abnormal lump or thickening of the tissues of the mouth
- Chronic sore throat or hoarseness.
- Difficulty in chewing or swallowing.
- A mass or lump in the neck



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