

ORAL CANCER

Each year 33,000 Americans are diagnosed with **oral cancer**. **Oral Cancer** is a cancer that forms in the lips, tongue, gums, the lining of your cheeks or the roof or bottom of your mouth. It is often diagnosed in its later stages. The treatments for oral cancer can be disfiguring and costly.

Are you at risk for **oral cancer**?

Risk factors for developing **oral cancer** include:

- Tobacco use including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco or dipping snuff.
- Alcohol use increases risk with the amount of alcohol consumed.
- Exposure to sunlight.



What to watch for

Warning signs can include any of the following:

- A lump or sore on your lip or in your mouth that does not heal.
- A white or red patch on gums, tongue, tonsils or inside your cheek.
- Trouble chewing or swallowing or moving tongue or jaw.
- Sore throat or the feeling that something is caught in your throat.
- A change in your voice.
- Loose teeth or dentures that no longer fit.
- Pain in one ear without hearing loss.

If you experience any of the above for more than two weeks, see your primary care provider or dental healthcare provider. These signs could either be cancer or an indication of another health problem such as an infection.

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Prevention of Oral Cancer

- If you smoke or use smokeless tobacco, stop.
- If you don't use tobacco, don't start.
 - Cigarette and cigar smoking are responsible for many of the cancers that form in the mouth. This includes the tongue, gums, and lining of cheeks.
 - Cigarette smoking is a major risk factor for cancers of the larynx (voice box), gums and the lining of your cheeks.
 - Cigar smoking is a major risk factor for cancer of the lip and throat.
- Limit alcohol use.
- When outdoors, use a lotion or lip balm that contains sunscreen. Wear a hat with a wide brim to block the sun.
- Have regular dental check-ups to check your entire mouth for signs of cancer.
- Eat a healthy, low-fat, high fiber diet that includes fruits and vegetables. It will help to reduce your risk.

