

Oral Cancer and Early Detection Fact Sheet

Oral Cancer Overview

- Of the more than 34,000 new patients diagnosed with oral cancer in the United States annually, only half live past the five-year survival milestone.¹
- Approximately 6,900 Americans die annually and for those who do survive, many are severely disfigured and suffer compromised lives.¹
- People who use tobacco products tend to have a higher risk for oral cancer, and those who use tobacco products *and* consume excessive alcohol have an especially high risk.²
- Of those diagnosed, 25% have no risk factors.^{3 4} Risk increases for tobacco users, excessive alcohol consumption, over-exposure to sunlight and poor nutrition.⁵
- Oral cancer has also been linked with human papilloma viruses, more commonly called HPVs.⁵
- Oral cancer is twice as common in men as in women.⁶ However, women are among the fastest-growing segments of those being diagnosed, as well as non-smokers and people under 40-years-old.⁷
- The average age of those diagnosed with oral cancer is 62-years-old, but about one-third of those diagnosed are under 55-years-old.⁶
- The most prevalent oral cancer sites are the tongue, floor of the mouth and the soft palate, but it also may be found on the lips, cheeks or gums.
- Oral cancer is very expensive to treat. The average cost for treating an advanced oral cancer case is over \$200,000.^{8 9}

Early Detection

- If oral cancer is detected in the precancerous stage, it can be prevented. Other benefits of early detection include: treatment may be less invasive, treatment costs are lower and recovery time is minimized.¹⁰
- If caught early enough, the five-year survival rate jumps to 82.7% for localized oral cancer.¹⁰
- The OralCDx BrushTest is a simple, painless diagnostic test used by dentists on harmless looking red or white spots that could be potentially dangerous, providing a great tool to detect early signs of oral cancer.
- Visiting your dentist is the best way to discuss your oral cancer risk and have your mouth checked for signs of oral cancer. In addition, to regular check-ups, you can perform self-examinations at home to look for early warning signs.
- Any lumps that increase in size, sores that don't heal within two weeks or changes in the appearance of soft tissue are things you should let your dentist know about. Persistent bleeding from the throat or mouth, difficulty swallowing, constant hoarseness or numbness anywhere in the mouth also could be early warning signs.

1 "Cancer Facts & Figures 2011." (2011). American Cancer Society. <http://www.cancer.org/acs/groups/content/@epidemiologysurveillance/documents/document/acspc-029771.pdf>

2 Oral Cancer Foundation, http://oralcancerfoundation.org/facts/alcohol_tobacco.htm, accessed April 2011.

3 Schantz SP, Yu GP. Head and neck cancer incidence trends in young Americans, 1973-1997, with a special analysis for tongue cancer. *Arch Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg.* Mar 2002;128(3):268-274.

4 Lingen M, Sturgis EM, Kies MS. Squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck in nonsmokers: clinical and biologic characteristics and implications for management. *Curr Opin Oncol.* May 2001;13(3):176-182

5 American Cancer Society, <http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/OralCavityandOropharyngealCancer/DetailedGuide/oral-cavity-and-oropharyngeal-cancer-risk-factors>, accessed July 2011.

6 American Cancer Society, <http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/OralCavityandOropharyngealCancer/DetailedGuide/oral-cavity-and-oropharyngeal-cancer-key-statistics>, accessed July 2011.

7 The Oral Cancer Foundation, <http://oralcancerfoundation.org/facts/index.htm>, accessed June 2011.

8 Funk GF, Hoffman HT, Kurnell LH, Ricks JM, Zimmerman MB, Corbee DP, et. al. Cost identification analysis in oral cavity cancer management. *Otolaryngol Head and Neck Surg* 1998;118(2):211-220.

9 Updated to 2011-Medical CPI.

10 National Cancer Institute, SEER Oral Cancer Survival Rates, 1999-2005.