

Oral Cancer

STICK YOUR TONGUE OUT AT CANCER.



When you think about cancer, you probably don't think about your mouth. But someone in the U.S. is diagnosed with cancer of the mouth, or "oral cancer," every 20 minutes. And someone dies from it every hour. That makes it worth thinking about.

Most people who get oral cancer are over 40 years old and smoke or chew tobacco. But oral cancer can strike at any age – whether you use tobacco or not.

More facts about oral cancer¹

- About 35,000 people in the U.S. are diagnosed each year
- Nearly 7,000 people in the U.S. die from the disease each year
- When caught late, only about 50% of people survive more than five years

Open up and say "detection"

Your dentist can check for oral cancer during your regular dental visit. The exam is painless. Your dentist will look for suspicious spots in and around your mouth – including the roof of your mouth, inside your cheeks and under your tongue.

Spotting oral cancer²

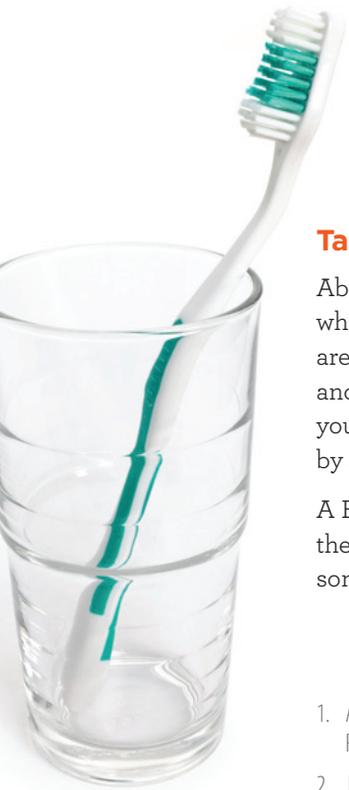
Be on the lookout in or around your mouth for a:

- Red or white patch
- Sore that bleeds easily or does not heal
- Thick or hard spot or a lump
- Roughened or crusted area

Other signs of oral cancer include numbness, pain or tenderness in your mouth. You may also notice a change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite down. Tell your dentist if you have any problems chewing, swallowing, speaking or moving your tongue or jaw.

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Taking a closer look

About 10% of patients will have a flat, painless white or red spot or a small sore. These symptoms are usually harmless. But since the harmless spots and more serious ones look alike, it's important your dentist test them to make sure. This is done by a BrushTest®.

A BrushTest is a simple, painless procedure where the dentist uses a small brush to gently scrape some of the unusual cells for a sample.

A laboratory tests the sample to find out whether any of the cells are cancerous or precancerous. The results may help determine your need for a surgical biopsy or other follow-up.

Plan on early detection

To help catch oral cancer early, Cigna covers the brush biopsy procedure on most of our Cigna Dental plans. If you're a Cigna customer, check your plan for details.

1. American Cancer Society. (n.d.). *Oral cavity and oropharyngeal cancer*. Retrieved from <http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/OralCavityandOropharyngealCancer/DetailedGuide/oral-cavity-and-oropharyngeal-cancer-key-statistics>
2. JADA, Vol. 141 <http://jada.ada.org> May 2010



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