

Oral Cancer...Should I be concerned?

Did you know that every time you get your teeth cleaned that your dentist and dental hygienist are also looking for oral cancer? It's estimated that approximately 49,750 people will be diagnosed with oral cancer and cancers of the throat, tonsils and back of the tongue in 2017.

According to the Mayo Clinic, the goal of oral cancer screening is to detect mouth cancer or precancerous lesions that may lead to mouth cancer at an early stage - when cancer or lesions are easiest to remove and most likely to be cured. This is why your dentist and/or your hygienist will examine your teeth and gums, but they also look for issues such as lumps, swellings, discolorations, ulcerations and any other abnormality.



* There are several **risk factors** to be aware of:

Diet: Poor nutrition puts you at risk, so eat your fruits and veggies!

Age: Most diagnosed are 55 & older but it has been found in many who are younger.

Alcohol: 7 out of 10 oral cancer patients are heavy drinkers, which means an average of 2 per day for men and 1 per day for women.

Tobacco: Smoking or chewing & even smokeless tobacco, all increase your risk orally as well as in other parts of the body, even the lips.

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV): This STD is associated with 9000 cases of head and neck cancer each year in the US is especially more common in young, non-smoking people.

Gender: Men are twice more likely to get oral cancer, which may be due to higher alcohol & tobacco or HPV.

Sunlight: Over-exposure to the sun is a risk for lip cancer, so use UV protection.

If you have any concerns, please give us a call or visit our website.

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