

# Keep Oral Cancer at Bay

Oral cancer is a serious issue for many Americans. There are over 40,000 cases and 10,000 deaths from oral cancer each year in the United States, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Take a moment to learn about this important issue.

## What is oral cancer?

Oral cancer is a cancer of the mouth, and it's sometimes linked to pharyngeal cancer (back of throat). It primarily affects individuals over the age of 40, but it can develop at any age.

## What causes oral cancer?

There are a number of potential causes of oral cancer, including:

- Tobacco, both smoked and smokeless
- Alcohol, particularly when combined with tobacco
- Overexposure to sunlight, especially the face
- Diets lacking in fruits and vegetables

## What helps prevent oral cancer?

Preventing oral cancer is a matter of counteracting its causes, such as by:

- Avoiding all tobacco use
- Drinking alcohol in moderation
- Limiting time in the sun
- Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables

## What are early warning signs of oral cancer?

Dental hygienists are on the front line of detecting oral cancer and similar illnesses. That's why it's critical to regularly visit the dentist. Additionally, individuals can look out for:

- Trouble chewing or swallowing
- Numbness of the mouth
- Earaches in only one ear
- Lumps in the mouth, lip or throat
- White or red spots in the mouth

***Any cancer is serious, and oral cancer is no exception. If you're concerned about your risk of developing oral cancer, speak to your doctor right away.***