

# Factsheet

## Oral cancer

Book an appointment with a dentist if you have any signs or symptoms

Oral cancer is a deadly disease that can cause death. Adults of all ages can develop oral cancer. It is very important to know what can increase your risk of oral cancer and early signs and symptoms.

### Signs and symptoms:

- A sore lump or change in texture in the mouth, lip, or throat
- Ulcers or blood blisters that do not heal or keep coming back
- A white or red patch in the mouth
- A feeling of something being stuck in your throat
- A change in how you chew or swallow
- Problems moving your jaw or tongue
- A lump in your neck
- Loose teeth
- A swelling or a sore on your lip that does not heal
- A sore throat that does not go away
- Having trouble speaking, or a change in your voice
- A change in feeling or no feeling in the tongue or other areas of the mouth
- Swelling of the jaw that stops dentures from fitting or makes them painful to wear

### Common activities that can increase your risk of oral cancer



#### Smoking and Tobacco

People who use tobacco are two times more likely to develop oral cancer than people who do not. Smoking cigarettes, cigars, or pipes, and chewing tobacco, betel quid, areca nut, pan or gutka can increase your risk of oral cancer.



#### Alcohol

Oral cancer is six times more common in people who drink alcohol than people who do not. Using alcohol and tobacco together increases the risk of oral cancer even more.



#### Oral Sex

70% of cancers in the mouth and throat are caused by human papillomavirus (HPV). This is the virus that causes cervical cancer. The mouth may be exposed to HPV during oral sex. Use a condom or dental dam during oral sex and get vaccinated against HPV.



#### Sun Exposure

The sun's UV rays can damage skin and cause cancer. The skin on the lips can be damaged easily. Wear a SPF lip balm, and sunscreen every day.

