

# Oral Cancer

## Facts



50,000

An estimated **50,000 people** are diagnosed with oral cancer each year in the US.  
In the US, a person dies from oral cancer **every hour of every day** (around 9,000 people a year)

### Risk Factors



**Tobacco**  
smoking cigarettes, pipes, cigars,  
snuff, chew, smokeless tobacco



**Alcohol**  
especially when you use tobacco  
at the same time



**Exposure to HPV**  
the sexually-transmitted, Human  
Papillomavirus (HPV16)

**Other conditions**  
that may promote oral cancer include:

- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Physical trauma<br>   | Infectious disease<br> |
| Poor oral hygiene<br> | Poor nutrition<br>     |



Oral cancers are **2x more common** in men than women.



Oral cancer's mortality rate is **particularly high**, not because it is hard to detect or diagnose, but because the cancer is **often discovered late** in its development.



### Self-exam

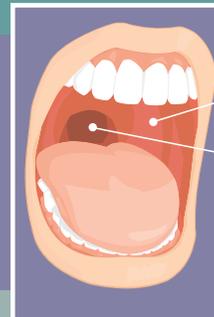


Perform a six-step oral cancer self-exam each month. Using a bright light and a mirror:

- 1 Remove any dentures
- 2 Look and feel inside the lips and the front of gums
- 3 Tilt head back to inspect and feel the roof of your mouth
- 4 Pull the cheek out to see its inside surface as well as the back of the gums
- 5 Pull out your tongue and look at all of its surfaces
- 6 Feel for lumps or enlarged lymph nodes (glands) in both sides of the neck including under the lower jaw

When performing an exam look for:

- White patches of the oral tissues — leukoplakia
- Red patches — erythroplakia
- Red and white patches — erythroleukoplakia
- A sore that fails to heal and bleeds easily



- An abnormal lump or thickening of the tissues of the mouth
- Chronic sore throat or hoarseness
- Difficulty in chewing or swallowing
- A mass or lump in the neck

Your family dentist or oral and maxillofacial surgeon is in the best position to detect oral cancer during your routine dental examinations.

