

# ARE YOU MOUTH AWARE?

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MOUTH CANCER

Every November, the **British Dental Health Foundation** organises and runs **Mouth Cancer Action Month**, under the message 'if in doubt get checked out'. Our campaign has become an influential springboard in increasing education and knowledge about a disease which awareness of still remains relatively low.

Understanding the risks and being able to spot the early warning signs are crucial to survival, so take a look at the below information and ask yourself – how **MOUTH AWARE** are you?



### ABOUT MOUTH CANCER

Mouth cancer is a disease which can affect the lips, tongue, cheeks and throat.

It can appear as a painless mouth ulcer that does not heal normally. A white or red patch in the mouth can also develop into a cancer.

Be aware of any unusual lumps in your mouth or jaw area and any persistent hoarseness.

If mouth cancer is diagnosed early, then the chances of a cure are good.

Mouth cancer can often be spotted in its early stages by your dental team during a mouth examination.

It is important to visit your dental team or doctor if these areas do not heal within three weeks.

#### EARLY DETECTION AND DIAGNOSIS ARE VITAL

Mouth cancer can often be spotted in its early stages by your dentist during a **thorough mouth examination**. Unfortunately, many people with mouth cancer go to their dentist or doctor too late.

### THE RISKS

Mouth cancer may affect anybody but many cases are linked to lifestyle choices and certain **risk factors** increase your chances of developing the disease.

#### SMOKING

The leading cause of mouth cancer, tobacco transforms saliva into a deadly cocktail that damages cells in the mouth and can turn them cancerous.

#### ALCOHOL

Excessive use is linked to more than a third of mouth cancer cases in men and a fifth in women. Heavy drinkers and smokers are up to 35 times more at risk.

#### HPV

A sexually transmitted virus which experts suggest could rival tobacco and alcohol as a leading risk factor within 10 years. Those with multiple sexual partners are more at risk.

#### DIET

New research has suggested that there is a noticeable risk reduction for mouth cancer with each additional daily serving of fruit or vegetables. A healthy, balanced diet is vital.

#### CHEWING TOBACCO

Although some people believe this type of tobacco is safer than smoking, the reality is that it is much more dangerous. The types of chewing tobacco products most used in the UK often contain a mix of ingredients including slaked lime, betel (or areca) nut and spices, flavourings and sweeteners.

### 6 THE SELF EXAMINATION...

As part of every check-up your dentist is required to carry out a visual examination on you to look for the early signs of mouth cancer. However, it is important that you too know how to check for signs of the disease.

Follow these 6 simple steps for mouth cancer self-examination.

#### HEAD & NECK

Look at your face and neck. Do both sides look the same? Look for any lumps, bumps or swellings that are only on one side of the face.

#### NECK

Feel and press along the sides and front of your neck. Can you feel any tenderness or lumps?

#### LIPS

Pull down your lower lip and look inside for any sores or change in colour. Next, use your thumb and forefinger to feel the lip for lumps, bumps or changes in texture. Repeat this on the upper lip.

#### CHEEK

Looking in a mirror, use your finger to pull out your cheek so that you can see inside. Look for red, white or dark patches. Put your index finger inside of your cheeks and your thumb on the outside. Gently squeeze and roll the cheek to check for any lumps, tenderness or ulcers.

#### THE MOUTH

Run your finger on the roof of your mouth to feel for any lumps. Repeat this on the floor of your mouth.

#### TONGUE

Stick out your tongue and look at the surface for any changes in colour or texture. Look at one side first, then the other side for any swellings, changes in colour or ulcers. Examine the underside of the tongue.



### THE STATISTICS

**6,767** **DIAGNOSED WITH MOUTH CANCER** annually, according to latest figures.



...that's **18** people every day!

It means that somebody is told they have mouth cancer every...

**77 MINUTES**

...which is not even the amount of time that it takes to play a game of rugby.



Mouth cancer takes more lives every year than **ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS** on Britain's roads.

**50% vs 90%**

Survival rates based on **LATE** and **EARLY** diagnosis.

**ONE IN SEVEN**

of us know somebody with mouth cancer.

**1/3**

The rate at which mouth cancer cases have **INCREASED** in the last decade.

**ONE QUARTER**

Do not think **SMOKING IS RELATED** to mouth cancer.

**3/4**

Support a **HPV VACCINATION** for boys aged 12 & 13.

**10%**

Admit they have never heard of **MOUTH CANCER**.

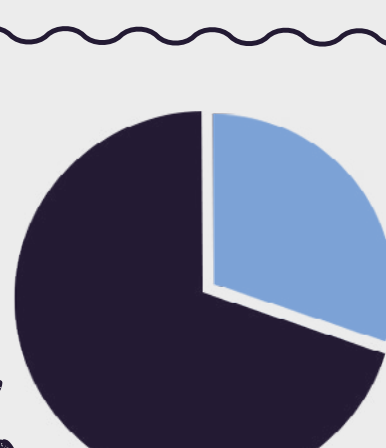
**DID YOU KNOW** that mouth cancer takes more lives in the UK than testicular and cervical cancer combined!

Mouth cancer by **AGE**

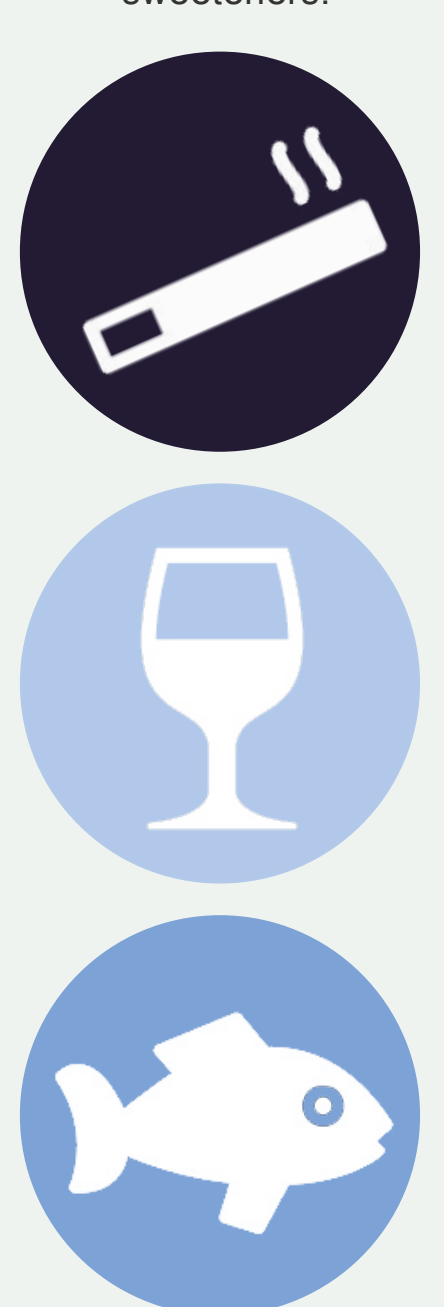


Mouth cancer is diagnosed in more than twice as many **MEN**.

**70%**



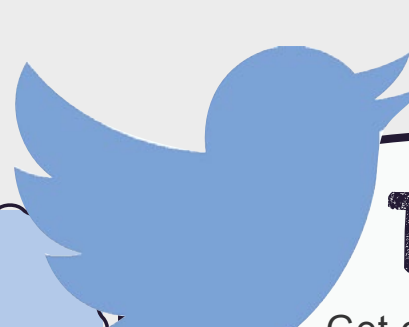
**30%** But it is being found in more **WOMEN** than ever before.



Unlike many other types of cancer, cases of mouth cancer are actually **PREDICTED TO INCREASE** in the future.



There is evidence of a geographical **NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE** in mouth cancer cases. **SCOTLAND** has far more cases than in England, Northern Ireland or Wales.



### TWEET US

Get online and help raise awareness amongst your friends and followers. Social media is a great way to spread the message and encourage others to show their **support for mouth cancer**.

@MOUTHCANCERORG  
#MOUTHCANCERACTION

### FACT

Mouth cancer can appear in different forms and can affect all parts of the **mouth, tongue, lips and throat**.

### CHECK

Check for changes in your mouth, any **red or white patches, ulcers or unusual lumps or swellings**.

### ACT

**If in doubt, get checked out** by your dentist or doctor.

Early detection and diagnosis is vital!

**MOUTH CANCER CAN AFFECT ANYONE SO BE ALERT FOR ANY CHANGES IN THE MOUTH.**

**ATTEND REGULAR CHECK-UPS WITH YOUR DENTIST.**

**PLEASE SUPPORT MOUTH CANCER ACTION MONTH AND HELP ENGAGE PEOPLE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MOUTH CANCER AWARENESS, ORAL HEALTH AND POSITIVE LIFESTYLES. TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**



[WWW.MOUTHCANCER.ORG/DONATE](http://WWW.MOUTHCANCER.ORG/DONATE)