

Key Risk Factors.

- **Smoking and chewing tobacco** – particularly if combined with heavy alcohol consumption
- **Heavy alcohol consumption** – particularly if combined with smoking
- **Excessive sun exposure** – particularly to the lips
- **Age** – oral cancer is more common in people over 50
- **Gender** – more men than women develop oral cancer

About **90 percent** of people with oral cancer use tobacco.



Symptoms.

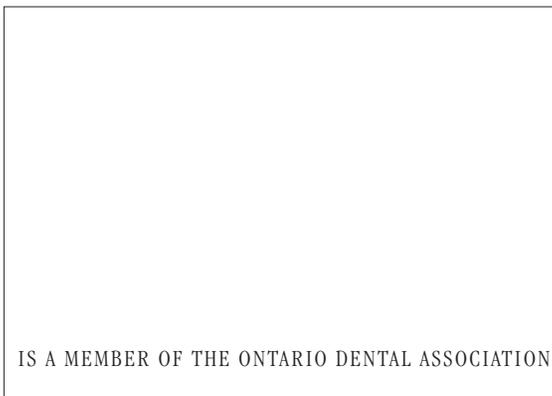
- **A sore on the lip or in the mouth that does not heal**
- **A lump on the lip or in the mouth or throat**
- **A white or red patch on the gums, tongue or lining of the mouth**
- **Unusual bleeding, pain or numbness in the mouth**
- **A sore throat that does not go away, or a feeling that something is caught in the throat**
- **Difficulty or pain with chewing or swallowing**
- **Swelling of the jaw that causes dentures to fit poorly or become uncomfortable**
- **A change in the voice and/or pain in the ear**

The Ontario Dental Association (ODA) is committed to providing exemplary oral health care for the people of Ontario. The ODA, which represents more than 80 percent of Ontario dentists, is a not-for-profit association dedicated to supporting the profession of dentistry and ensuring its dentists are valued members of their patients' health-care team.



For more information about the relationship between oral and overall health, ask your dentist.

www.youroralhealth.ca



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Oral Cancer isn't this easy to spot.

Ask your dentist



What is **Oral Cancer**?

Oral cancer refers to all cancers of the oral cavity, which includes the following:

- lips
- tongue
- teeth
- gums (gingiva)
- lining inside the lips and cheeks (labial mucosa and buccal mucosa),
- floor of the mouth
- roof of the mouth (palate)
- the area behind the wisdom teeth

Most oral cancers are located on the sides of the tongue, floor of the mouth and lips.

Oral cancer starts in the cells of the mouth. Normally these cells are quite resistant to damage, but repeated injury from smoking, alcohol or even friction may cause sores or painful areas where cancer can start.

Incidence and **Survival Rate.**

Oral cancer accounts for about 2.2 percent of all new cancer cases in Canada each year.* That's more than 3,000 new cases every year.

- Oral cancer is aggressive.
- Oral cancer carries a higher mortality rate than either melanoma or cervical cancer.
- The five-year survival rate for oral cancer is low, at just below 50 percent.
- Early detection results in the survival rate increasing sharply to 80 percent.



Your **Oral Health** Expert.

Your dentist does more than protect and care for your teeth, gums and smile. Your dentist can also help keep you healthy. As oral health experts, dentists are in a unique position to help in the early detection of many medical conditions. If you have already been diagnosed with specific health problems, your dentist can also help you manage your oral and overall health by customizing your dental treatment.

Without an examination by a dentist, most early signs of oral cancer are difficult to detect. If you notice a mouth sore or anything out of the ordinary that does not go away or heal after a couple of weeks, discuss it with your dentist. Oral health is a lifelong commitment. With regular visits to your dentist and good oral health routines, you will have lots to smile about.



90-Second Oral Cancer Screening Test is performed by your dentist.

For answers to your questions about your oral health, visit our website
www.youroralhealth.ca

* Canadian Cancer Society: Canadian Cancer Statistics 2009

Early **Detection.**

The mouth has long been recognized as a mirror reflecting the health of the body. Dentists are trained in medicine so they recognize the relationships between oral and overall health. Through the oral exam, your dentist can see if there are any abnormalities or changes in your mouth that might be indications of health problems, such as oral cancer or diabetes. Most people see their dentist regularly, so your dentist is often the first health-care professional to have an opportunity to detect the many health conditions that affect your mouth.

At each visit, your dentist will conduct a medical history review and ask you about your current health. It's important to answer these questions carefully. What you say can help your dentist alert you to potential health concerns that may require further investigation, diagnosis or treatment by a physician.

What Conditions Can My Dentist Detect? **

By looking in your mouth and asking you some questions, your dentist can alert you to possible disorders that may need further diagnosis or treatment. Some health-related conditions that show up in the mouth include:

- Oral cancer
- Diabetes
- Pregnancy
- HIV/AIDs
- Thyroid problems
- Iron deficiency/anemia
- Leukemia
- Eating disorders

** Dental Management of the Medically Compromised Patient: Little, Falace, Miller and Rhodus. Mosby 2002

Talk with your dentist about your oral health, especially if you have experienced changes in your overall health.