

Oral and throat cancer and your health

In Your Neighborhood

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In 2013, the Canadian Cancer Society estimated that there were 4100 new cases of oral cancer diagnosed. Eleven new cases each day! On average, 16 years of life is lost to oral cancer, one more than all cancers in general. American statistics show that there are three times as many deaths from oral cancer as there is from cervical cancer

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The risk factors for oral cancer include smoking, heavy alcohol consumption (especially if combined with smoking), use of smokeless tobacco, and increased exposure to the sun causing higher risks for cancers on the lips. Those who use smokeless tobacco are 15 times more likely to develop oral cancer than those who don't. Today, one of the fastest growing causes of oral cancer is the human papillomavirus (HPV) and it is estimated that in the near future this will be the leading cause of oral and throat cancer. It has also been shown that a diet lower in fruits and vegetables increases the risk of oral cancer as fruits and vegetables seem to have a protective factor that lowers the risk of oral cancer.

In the past, men (especially men over 40 years of age) used to have a 6:1 higher risk than women but now that is changing with men now only twice as likely to have oral cancer than women. Oral cancer is 70 per cent more common in those with a family history. The risk of oral cancer is 2.5 times higher in those with gum disease and 60 times greater in those with six or more missing teeth.

The 5-year survival rate is only 20 per cent if detected late. The mortality rate of oral cancer is greater than that of breast and prostate cancer, however, oral cancer is one of the most preventable cancers with an 80 per cent success rate if discovered early.

Early detection and prevention can be accomplished with regular dental exams, elimination of the use of smokeless tobacco, smoking and excessive alcohol consumption, use of lip balm with UV protection, and a diet higher in fruits and vegetables.

At **Palermo Village Dental** in Oakville, we routinely perform an **oral cancer screening** with visual inspection under magnification, palpation of the head and neck area and with the Identafi Oral Cancer Screening

Contact our office today for your oral cancer exam – ***it may save your life!***

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