

DENTAL HEALTH NEWS FROM THE NIH

Oral Cancer—Are You at Risk?

(NAPSA)—Oral cancers, cancers that occur in the mouth and/or pharynx (part of the throat), are diagnosed in about 28,000 Americans each year. People who use tobacco or drink alcohol are more likely to develop oral cancer than those who don't use these substances. And, using both tobacco and alcohol puts you at much greater risk than using either substance alone.

It's important to find oral cancer early when it can be treated more successfully, say dental researchers at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). They advise you to see your doctor or dentist if you notice any changes in your mouth or throat that last more than two weeks. If you use tobacco products or drink alcohol, you should be especially watchful for any changes that may be related to oral cancer. Finding oral cancer early can increase your chances for successful treatment and recovery.

Signs and Symptoms of Oral Cancer Can Include:

- A sore, irritation, lump or thick patch in your mouth, lip or throat
- A white or red patch in your mouth
- A feeling that something is caught in your throat
- Difficulty chewing or swallowing
- Difficulty moving your jaw or tongue



To view or order a free pamphlet about oral cancer and a card that lists the steps of an oral cancer exam, visit: www.nidcr.nih.gov.

- Numbness in your tongue or other areas of your mouth
- Swelling of your jaw that causes dentures to fit poorly or become uncomfortable.

The Oral Cancer Exam

Oral cancer can spread quickly. So it's important to find it early when it can be treated more successfully, say dental researchers at the NIH. An oral cancer examination can detect early signs of the disease. The exam is painless and quick—it takes only a few minutes. Your regular dental checkup is an excellent opportunity to have the exam. During the exam, your dentist or dental hygienist will check your face, neck, lips and entire mouth for possible signs of cancer.