

Oral Cancer

The American Cancer Society estimates that oral cancer strikes tens of thousands of Americans each year. Only about 56 percent of those diagnosed with oral cancer will survive more than five years.

The reason these statistics are so grim is that oral cancer is often detected in its later stages. But when it's detected early, before the disease spreads to destroy healthy tissue, the chances of survival are greatly improved.



A thorough exam



Early stage of oral cancer



Avoid tobacco and excessive alcohol use

How do we detect oral cancer?

Because early detection is vital to surviving oral cancer, we will perform a thorough oral cancer screening each time we see you in our office for an exam.

We'll feel for lumps or abnormal tissue changes on your neck and inside your mouth. We'll also thoroughly examine the soft tissues in your mouth, especially the most frequent oral cancer sites: your tongue, the floor of your mouth, your soft palate, your lips, and your gums.

What you can do

Come see us at least twice a year for your regular checkups, and let us know if you notice any of these warning signs: a sore that does not heal or that bleeds easily; a red, white, or otherwise discolored patch or lump in or around your mouth; an area that seems to have thickened, raised, or become hardened; a rough patch of tissue; difficulty chewing or swallowing; or a chronic sore throat or hoarseness.

It's vital that you not ignore a mouth sore just because it doesn't hurt. Most pre-cancerous and cancerous lesions are completely painless.

You can also minimize your chances of developing oral cancer by making some lifestyle changes. Don't smoke or use chewing tobacco, avoid excessive alcohol usage, and make sure you're eating plenty of fruits and vegetables each day.