

# Oral Cancer Self Screening



By doing regular self-examinations, undergoing professional evaluation, and avoiding risk factors, you can improve your chances of preventing oral cancer.

## What is oral cancer?

- Develops in the tissues of the oral cavity, which includes the lips, tongue, gums, floor of the mouth, roof of the mouth and the inner lining of the cheeks

## How can I protect myself?

- Practice good oral hygiene – brush twice a day and floss daily
- Develop good lifestyle habits – avoid tobacco use and limit alcohol
- Have a regular dental check-up every 6-12 months
- Get vaccinated to protect against human papilloma infection

## How do I perform a self-examination?

- Face:** Look at yourself in the mirror. Both sides of your face and neck should look nearly the same. Look at the skin on your neck and face for any changes in color, lumps or sores.
- Lips:** Look for sores or any changes in color or texture.
- Gums:** Use your fingers to raise upper and lower lips to check color and conditions of the gums. Check for swelling, red, white, or black discoloration or bleeding.
- Cheeks:** Using your fingers draw back the side of the mouth to check inside the cheeks.
- Tongue:** Stick the tongue out and move it side to side, check as far back as can be seen in the mirror, and feel the area. Look for unusual lumps, white or red patches.
- Floor of the mouth:** Check the sides and underneath your tongue.
- Roof of the mouth:** Check the upper palate as far back as you can see.
- Neck and Jaw:** Gently feel your neck and jaw for any swelling or tenderness or a painless, firm, non-moving lump on the outside of the neck.

## Signs and symptoms to watch for

- A sore in the mouth that does not heal within 3 weeks
- A lump or swelling in the mouth, jaw or neck that persists for more than 3 weeks
- A red, white or black discoloration in the mouth
- Unexplained loosening of teeth
- Difficulty in swallowing, chewing or moving the jaw or tongue
- An earache on one side which persists for more than a few days

Ready  
to quit  
tobacco?



If you notice any abnormalities during self-examination, consult your dentist or healthcare provider promptly.

