



A Message from Your
Lake Arrowhead Dentist:

Knowing Your Mouth - What Is Oral Cancer?

Oral cancer is the sixth most common cancer, with more than 43,000 cases diagnosed on the United States this year; it can be particularly dangerous because it is often undetected in early stages. Your dentist can, in many cases, be the first line of defense by conducting oral cancer screenings to find changes in your mouth, especially around your tongue and throat.



Hugh A. Bialecki,
D.M.D.

What factors can increase my risk? We know that tobacco and alcohol use, sun exposure to the lips, and more recently, human papilloma virus (HPV) infection, play a significant role. About 80 million Americans are infected with HPV, with 14 million estimated new cases per year. HPV vaccines could prevent oropharyngeal cancer.

How could I tell if I have oral cancer? Usually painless in early stages, oral cancer can become painful as it grows. Changes in your bite, mouth sores that bleed easily, lumps, rough or crusty spots, difficulty in chewing, speaking or swallowing are all signs requiring immediate evaluation by your dentist.

What does my dentist do to look for cancer? Annual oral cancer screenings feeling and looking for lumps, irregular tissue or other changes around your head, neck, tongue and throat, are key. An oral cancer screening should be a regular part of your dental check up even when you have no symptoms. Other screening devices may be used and are being tested now for effectiveness.

How is oral cancer treated? Treatment can include surgery, radiation and chemotherapy, as determined with your physician.

What about prevention? Avoiding smoking, chewing tobacco, excessive alcohol use and sun exposure will help. HPV vaccination for preteen boys and girls ages 11 and 12 is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The vaccine can also be given in males through age 21 and females through age 26, if not administered as a pre-teen. Early detection and treatment profoundly affects the outcome of any oral cancer. Regular dental visits and screenings can be extremely important. Talk with your dentist about more information.

Hugh A. Bialecki, D.M.D.

LakeArrowheadDentist.com

909.337.0705

Grass Valley Road at Club House Drive