

Radiation Therapy Center

Of Morris Hospital

Patient Services Newsletter



APRIL 2021



ORAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

April is Oral Cancer Awareness Month, a time when dental professionals join with surgeons and other medical professionals to highlight the dangers oral cancer brings, and to call attention to the progress made in fighting this disease.

Clarity

Oral cancer refers to cancer of the mouth, while pharyngeal cancer refers to cancer of the pharynx, or back of the throat. Your dental professionals are a first line of defense and diagnosis for oral and pharyngeal cancer. Be sure to discuss this with your dentist and hygienist at every checkup.

Mortality

Sadly, the death rate from oral and pharyngeal cancers remains frustratingly high, at around 43 percent five years after diagnosis. This, [according to the Oral Cancer Foundation](#), is because so few cases are diagnosed early enough to allow doctors to treat the disease. This year:

- More than 45,000 Americans will hear the diagnosis from their doctors
- More than 8,000 Americans will die from oral cancer

Word of Mouth

Because this treatable cancer causes needless deaths due to late diagnosis, a number of professional organizations are coming together to spread the word on prevention, early diagnosis, and the search for cures:

- Academy of General Dentistry
- American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology
- American Academy of Oral Medicine
- American Academy of Periodontology
- American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
- American Dental Association

- American Dental Hygienists' Association

Causes

Doctors and surgeons are constantly striving to understand oral cancer's origins, though the issue is complex. Some behaviors, [according to the Mayo Clinic](#), place you at greater risk of contracting oral and pharyngeal cancers:

- Human papillomavirus (HPV)—HPV 16 is the leading cause of oropharyngeal cancer
- Tobacco—smoked or smokeless tobacco causes cancer; smokeless tobacco causes cancers of the mouth, throat and esophagus
- Alcohol—combining tobacco with alcohol greatly increases your risk of contracting oral cancer
- Sun exposure—you risk lip cancer
- Diet—not eating enough fruits and vegetables can increase your risk

Age, too, is a factor—most oral cancer victims are aged 40 and over.

Prevention

The causes themselves provide ample direction on helping to lower your risks of developing oral cancer:

- Cut out tobacco in all forms
- Drink moderately, and never combine alcohol and tobacco use
- Limit exposure to the sun, using a high Sun Protection Formula (SPF) sunscreen and lip balm
- Eat plenty of natural foods, including more fruits and vegetables

Additionally, brush and floss regularly, exercise to maintain a healthy immune system, and [see your dentist regularly](#).

Early Detection

Your dental professional is best equipped to detect early signs of oral and pharyngeal cancer, but you can monitor your own body for symptoms:

- Difficulty chewing or swallowing, or difficulty moving your jaw or tongue
- Numbness of the tongue or other areas in your mouth
- Pain in only one ear, unaccompanied by hearing loss
- A sore, lump or other irritation in your mouth, on your lip, or in your throat
- A white or red spot in your mouth, especially on the mucosal membrane (inside cheek)

Cures

If detected early, oral cancer can be treated effectively. The best course is a team approach, combining the skills of your dentist, surgeons, oncologists, nutritionists and others. Choices of therapies to fight oral cancer include:

- surgery, radiation and additional surgery
- radiation, surgery, and chemotherapy

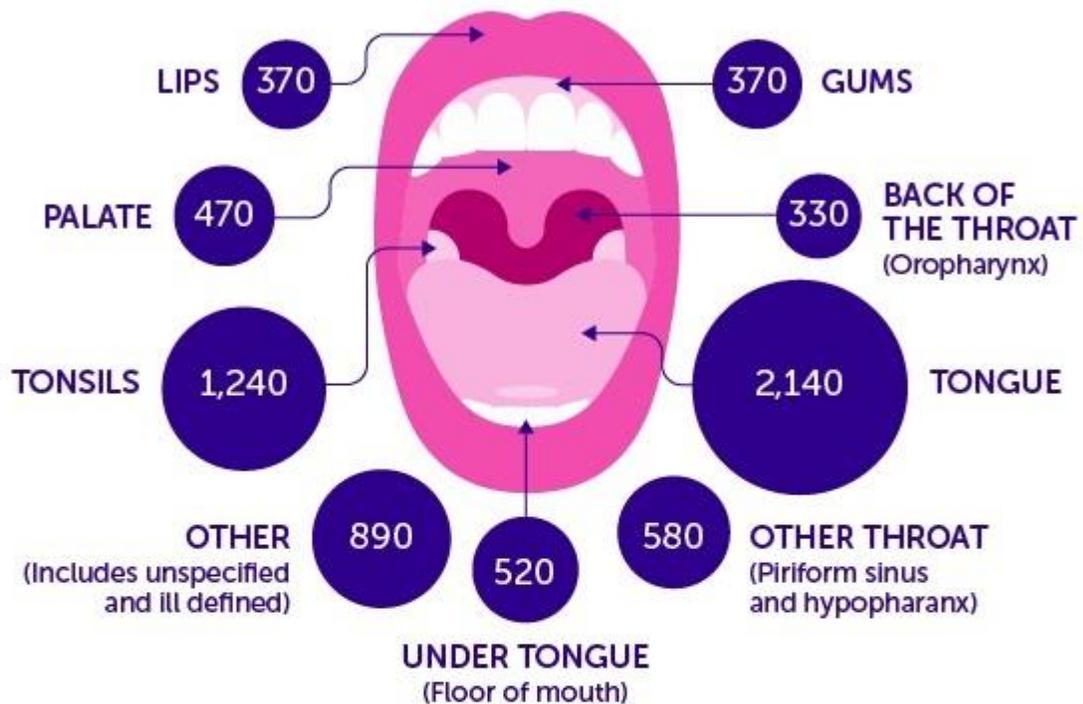
Attitude

No cancer is minor. The emotional aspects of receiving a diagnosis and fighting a cancer can be as important for a good prognosis as the finest team of medical professionals. Early detection is still the best way to lower the risk of oral and pharyngeal cancer. This April, make detection and prevention of oral cancer a priority in your life.



MOUTH CANCER AND THE THREE MAIN PREVENTABLE RISK FACTORS

MOUTH CANCERS AND THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF CASES PER YEAR UK, 2010-2012



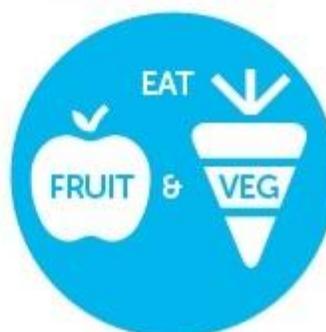
THE THREE MAIN PREVENTABLE RISK FACTORS

Proportion of mouth cancer cases that could be prevented each year in the UK, by avoiding each risk factor

TOBACCO



DIET LOW IN FRUIT & VEG



ALCOHOL



Fruit and Vegetable Salad

Crunchy, tangy, and refreshing, this salad is delicious either as a side dish or a light entree on a hot summer evening!



INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium cucumbers
- 8 ounces strawberries
- 8 ounces grapes
- 1 small red bell pepper
- 8 to 10 basil leaves (cut into strips)
- 2 tablespoons [olive oil](#)
- 1 lime
- 1/2 teaspoon [salt](#)
- 2 to 3 teaspoons sunflower seeds
- Romaine lettuce leaves (optional, for serving)

☐ INSTRUCTIONS

1. Chop the cucumber, strawberries, grapes, and red bell pepper into bite sized chunks.
2. Chop the basil leaves.
3. Juice the lime. In a small bowl, combine the lime juice, olive oil, and salt.
4. Place the chopped fruits, vegetables, and basil in a large bowl. Add the sunflower seeds.
5. Pour the dressing into the bowl and toss to combine everything thoroughly.
6. Spoon the salad onto romaine lettuce leaves for a fresh, pretty presentation.