

Early Detection Saves Lives

In honor of Oral Cancer Awareness Month, Dental Oncology Professionals of North Texas will be offering free oral cancer screenings on Friday, April 29 from 10 AM to 2 PM. Oral cancer is not a rare disease. Approximately 37,000 people are diagnosed with oral cancer every year in the United States. It kills one person every hour of every day and 100 new cases are identified each day. The good news is that oral cancer can be found early in its development.

Who should be screened for oral cancer?

Everyone age 16 and over should be screened. Oral cancer can be caught early, even as a pre-cancer. With early detection, survival rates are high and side effects from treatment are at their lowest. These screenings are quick and non-invasive. Like other available screenings such as those for cervical, skin, prostate, colon and breast cancer, oral cancer screenings are an effective means of finding cancer at its early, highly curable stages. Make them part of your annual health check-ups.

What are the risk factors for oral cancer?

There are two distinct pathways by which most people come to oral cancer. One is through the use of tobacco and alcohol, a long term historic problem and cause; and the other is through exposure to the HPV-16 virus (human papilloma virus 16), a newly identified etiology. This is the same virus that is responsible for the vast majority of cervical cancers in women. **The most rapidly growing population affected by oral cancer is young, healthy, non-smokers who have been exposed to the HPV-16 virus.**

Early Indicators:

- Red and/or white discolorations of the soft tissues of the mouth or the sides of the tongue
- Any sore in the mouth that does not heal within 14 days
- Hoarseness that lasts for a prolonged period of time

Advanced Indicators:

- A sensation of something stuck in the throat
- Numbness in or around the mouth
- Difficulty in moving the jaw or tongue
- Difficulty in swallowing
- Ear pain that occurs only on one side
- A sore under a denture, which even after adjustment of the denture, still does not heal
- A lump or thickening that develops in the mouth or on the neck

Since it is possible to have oral cancer and have no pain, an oral cancer screening should be conducted every year. Take advantage of this free offer and get screened today. Dental Oncology Professionals of North Texas is conveniently located just minutes east of downtown Dallas at 6452 Broadway Boulevard in Garland. Call Norberto Diaz at 214-226-6945 to make an appointment for your complimentary screening.

For more information about oral cancer, please log onto The Oral Cancer Foundation's official website at www.oralcancer.org.