



Oral Cancer Awareness Month

April is Oral Cancer Awareness Month, and it is a great opportunity to remind everyone that regular oral cancer examinations by your oral health professional remain the best method to detect oral cancer in its early stages.

Self-Discovery Exam

It is recommended to conduct a Check Your Mouth exam on a regular basis. This includes an examination of your neck, gum tissue, inner cheeks, tongue, floor and roof of your mouth, and your throats and tonsils. Be sure to take note of any changes you notice over time, and it is always better to be safe than sorry. Visit [CheckYourMouth.org](https://www.checkyourmouth.org) for more detailed information.

Things To Look Out For

- Persistent mouth sores and/or pain
- A lump or thickening in the cheek
- A white or red patch on the gums, tongue, tonsil, or lining of the mouth
- Lump in the neck
- Difficulty swallowing, chewing, or moving the jaw
- Numbness of the tongue or other part of mouth
- Loosening of the teeth
- Change in the way your teeth fit together
- Voice changes
- Persistent bad breath

Key Facts

- Approximately **53,000** people in the U.S. will be diagnosed this year with oral cancer.
- The global diagnosis is over **657,000** each year.
- **145** new people every day will be diagnosed with oral cancer, and one person every hour of the day will die from it.
- There are nearly **9,000** deaths from oral cancer every year.
- Of people newly diagnosed with oral cancer, only about **60%** will live longer than **5 years**.
- If detected early, the 5-year survival rate is approximately **80% to 90%**.

Rural Communities

- Oral cancer screenings and education are effective ways to increase knowledge and awareness of oral cancer risk factors and signs & symptoms in rural communities.
- In 2021, 4,297 of the nation's 6,319 Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) were in rural or partially rural areas.