



## Mouth Cancer

### What is Mouth cancer?

Mouth cancer is an abnormal growth that can affect the lips, tongue, cheeks and throat. Anyone can be affected by mouth cancer, whether they have their own teeth or not.

### What can cause mouth cancer?

- Most cases of mouth cancer are linked to tobacco and alcohol, if consumed together the risk is even greater.
- Over-exposure to sunlight can also increase the risk of cancer of the lips.
- Many recent reports have linked mouth cancer to the human papillomavirus (HPV).
- Mouth cancers are more common in people over 40, particularly men. But, younger people and women can get it too.

### What are the signs of mouth cancer?

Mouth cancer can appear in different forms and can affect all parts of the mouth, tongue and lips. Look for the changes in the mouth, seek further help if the following do not heal within three weeks

- a painless mouth ulcer that does not heal normally
- a white or red patch in the mouth
- unusual lumps or swellings

### How can mouth cancer be detected early?

Mouth cancer can often be spotted in its early stages by the dentist during a thorough mouth examination. If mouth cancer is recognised early, then the chances of a cure are good. It is important to visit dentist regularly, as often as they recommend, even if wearing dentures. This is especially important for people who smoke or drink alcohol.

When brushing your teeth, look out for any changes in the mouth, report any red or white patches, or ulcers, that have not cleared up within three weeks.

### Prevention

- When exposed to the sun, be sure to use a good protective sun cream, and put the correct type of barrier cream on your lips.
- A good diet, rich in vitamins A, C and E, provides protection against the development of mouth cancer. Plenty of fruit and vegetables help the body to protect itself, in general, from most cancers.
- Cut down on smoking and drinking.