

Be **mouth** aware!

**What YOU need to know
about mouth cancer**



Mouth cancer facts & figures

1. One person every three hours is lost to mouth cancer.
2. More people in the UK die each year of mouth cancer than of cervical and testicular cancer combined.
3. Mouth cancer causes more deaths in the UK each year than road traffic accidents.
4. 8,864 people in the UK were diagnosed with mouth cancer last year.
5. Last year, 3,034 people in the UK lost their life to mouth cancer, with an increase by 46% in deaths in the last 10 years.
6. Mouth cancer is twice as common in men than in women, although an increasing number of women are being diagnosed with the disease.
7. 58% of mouth cancer appear on the tongue and tonsils.
8. 78% of cases occur in the over 55 age group.
9. The 10 year survival rate is between 18% and 57%, depending on where the cancer strikes and how early it is detected.
10. Five year survival rate has hardly improved in the last few decades due to late detection.

Causes of mouth cancer

Awareness of the major risk factors of mouth cancer is as low as 9%.

The leading causes of mouth cancer in the UK are tobacco and alcohol. If you drink or smoke, this increases your risk of mouth cancer. If you both smoke and drink alcohol, then this further increases your risk.



Other risk factors

- Chewing tobacco or other smokeless tobacco products.
- Chewing Betel nuts with or without added tobacco.
- An unhealthy diet, low in fruit and vegetables, leading to a lack of vitamins and minerals.
- The human papillomavirus (HPV).
- Weak immune system caused by some illnesses and medications.
- Family history of mouth cancer can cause a slight increase in the risk.
- Previous cancer - People who have had lung cancer, cancer of the food pipe and a type of cancer of the cervix, are at an increased risk of mouth cancer.
- Sunlight and sunbeds - Too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or sunbeds is the main cause of skin cancer. Skin cancer can develop on the lip.
- Physical activity - Research suggests that people who do little or no activity may have a bigger risk of developing mouth cancer.
- Poor oral hygiene.

Signs of mouth cancer

Awareness of the major signs and symptoms for mouth cancer is as low as 17%.

1. Mouth ulcers that are painful and do not heal within several weeks.
2. Unexplained, persistent lumps in the mouth or neck that don't go away.

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3. Unexplained loose teeth or sockets that do not heal after extractions.
 4. Unexplained, persistent numbness or an 'odd' feeling on the lip or tongue.
 5. Red or white patches on the lining of the mouth or tongue.
 6. Changes in speech such as lisp or persistent hoarseness.
 7. Dramatic weight loss.
 8. Persistent pain or tenderness when swallowing.

IF IN DOUBT, GET IT CHECKED OUT!

This can be done by a GP or dentist. If you have no teeth, it is still important to see a dentist at least once a year for a cancer screening.

Further information and support

For more information on mouth cancer, please contact **Cancer Research UK** on cancerresearchuk.org or phone them on 0300 1231022.

If you wish to speak to a cancer nurse please phone the **Nurse Helpline** on 0808 800 4040 or contact them online.

Or go to the **NHS website** for further information, resources and support – www.nhs.uk/conditions/mouth-cancer

References: www.nhs.uk/conditions/mouth-cancer
www.mouthcancerfoundation.org
www.cancerresearchuk.org

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656.



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