Editorial

HAVE YOU BEEN CHECKED?
IT ONLY TAKES 2 MINUTES!

So you know all about colonoscopies, mammograms, PSA tests and PAP tests. But do you know about the easiest exam you should have each year? It takes about two minutes and it is painless – it is an exam for mouth or oral cancer.

Oral cancer is highly preventable if the correct steps are taken. Adults over 40 years of age should get an annual oral cancer exam from their dental or medical provider. Even if you wear dentures, you should have your mouth and surrounding head and neck region examined once a year to check for oral cancer. If you are under the age of 40, but use tobacco products, drink alcohol, spend a lot of time in the sun or are at risk for the Human Papillomavirus due to certain sexual behaviors, you should be sure to have a yearly oral cancer exam.

Ninety percent of individuals diagnosed with oral cancer use tobacco products of some kind. Quitting the use of all tobacco products significantly reduces the risk of developing oral cancer. The Maryland Tobacco Quitline is a free service provided by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to help people quit using tobacco products. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) for free telephone-based counseling, support and tips to help you quit for good, or visit www.smokingstopshere.com.

Remember, early detection is important. Ask your dental or medical provider for an oral cancer exam and get checked today! For more information, please visit the Office of Oral Health's website at http://fha.dhmh.maryland.gov/oralhealth/.

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