

Most oral cancer is preventable. Early detection is critical.

Know your risks and get a yearly oral cancer exam

- Approximately 40,000 new cases of oral cancer are expected in the United States each year.
- Oral cancer can occur on the tongue, in the mouth and gums, under the tongue, and in the back of the mouth and throat.

Know the risks — prevent oral cancer

Risk factors for oral cancer:

- **Gender** — oral cancer is twice as common in men
- **Tobacco use** — avoid the use of cigarettes, chew, snuff, pipes, cigars, etc. Ninety percent of patients with oral cancer use tobacco.
- **Alcohol use** — limit alcohol consumption. Eighty percent of patients with oral cancer frequently consume alcohol.
- **Diet** — Eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day may provide some protection against oral cancer.
- **Prolonged sun exposure** — Use lip balm that has an SPF of at least 15. Thirty percent of patients with oral cancer have outdoor occupations associated with prolonged sun exposure.
- **Human papillomavirus (HPV)** — Be aware of sexual behaviors leading to HPV exposure.

Need help quitting tobacco use?



- **The Maryland Tobacco Quitline is a free service provided by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) 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 smoking for good. You can also visit smokingstopshere.com.**

Talk to your dentist

Talk to your dental or medical provider about how the HPV vaccine might prevent oropharyngeal cancer (cancer in the middle part of the throat).

Consult with a dental or medical provider if any of the following conditions last more than two weeks.

1. A sore on your lip or in your mouth that does not heal. This is the most common symptom of oral cancer.
2. Patches inside your mouth or on your lips that are white, or a mixture of red and white.
3. A sore throat or a feeling that something is caught in your throat.
4. Numbness on your tongue or in other areas of your mouth.
5. Difficulty moving the jaw or tongue.
6. Difficulty wearing dentures.
7. Difficulty swallowing or chewing.
8. Loosening of the teeth or pain around the teeth or jaw.

Early detection and prevention are key

Get an oral exam once a year. Ask your dental provider for an oral cancer exam during your visit.

