Oral cancer can affect the:

- Mouth, including roof, floor and cheeks
- Gums
- Throat
- Minor salivary glands
- Tongue
- Lips

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ORAL CANCER**

While anyone can develop oral cancer, certain factors can greatly increase your risk. Routine dental exams should include life-saving oral cancer screenings. Ask your dentist about these screenings.

**FAST FACTS**

- Over 90% of cases are squamous cell carcinomas, which begin in the cells that form the lining of the mouth and throat.
- Average age of diagnosis – 62

- The risk greatly increases when heavy use of both tobacco and alcohol are combined.
- More than 2x as common in men as women

- Each year in the U.S., roughly 48,000 people will be diagnosed with oral cancer. That’s about 132 people per day.
- Another 9,600 people will die from oral cancer in the U.S. this year. That’s at least one person per hour, every hour of the day.
- Over 90% of cases are squamous cell carcinomas, which begin in the cells that form the lining of the mouth and throat.
- Average age of diagnosis – 62

**RISK FACTORS**

- Tobacco use
- Alcohol use
- Human papillomavirus (HPV) infection
- UV light exposure (usually from sun/tanning beds)
- Poor diet
- Compromised immune system
- Genetic syndromes
- Graft-versus-host-disease (due to stem cell transplant)
- Untreated periodontal (gum) disease

**SYMPTOMS**

If you experience any of the following symptoms for more than 2 weeks, talk to your doctor.

- Mouth sore that doesn’t heal
- Persistent sore throat that doesn’t get better
- Thickening or lump in the cheek
- Mouth pain
- White or red patches on the tonsils, mouth, tongue or gums
- Tingleing or numbness in the mouth or tongue
- Trouble chewing, swallowing, or moving the jaw and/or tongue
- Loose teeth or loose in the neck
- Swelling of the jaw (may notice dentures not fitting)
- Consistent bad breath
- Weight loss
- Voice changes

**PREVENTION**

While oral cancer is not always preventable, there are things you can do to significantly reduce your risk.

- Limit or quit smoking and drinking alcohol.
- Avoid exposure to HPV – use protection during oral sex
- Reduce exposure to UV light – protect yourself from the sun and don’t use tanning beds
- Follow a healthy diet
- Make sure dentures fit properly
- Intervene early to treat pre-cancerous growths
- Visit the dentist regularly for checkups

**UNITED CONCORDIA DENTAL**

Important Disclosures: UnitedConcordia.com/Disclaimers

Sources: Oral Cancer; National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research; 2016
Oral Cavity and Oropharyngeal Cancer; American Cancer Society; 2016
Oral, Head & Neck Cancer Awareness Month; Oral Cancer Foundation; 2017
Dental; Oral Cancer Foundation; 2016