

Having an Oral Cancer Exam



RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

What is Oral or Mouth Cancer?

Cancer that occurs in the mouth and on the lips.
This kind of cancer kills many people each year.

Could I have oral cancer and not know it?

Yes. The early stages of oral cancer are often not painful.

What does that mean for me?

- Have an oral cancer exam.
- An oral cancer exam can find cancer early.
- If oral cancer is found early, there is a better chance of a cure.

How often should I have an oral cancer exam?

You should have an oral cancer exam every year.

Who can do an oral cancer exam?

- Dentist
- Dental Hygienist
- Nurse or Nurse Practitioner
- Doctor/Physician
- Physician Assistant

Why is an oral cancer exam important to me?

Because it can tell if you have oral cancer early, so there is a better chance of a cure.

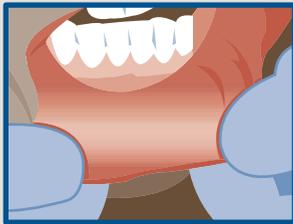


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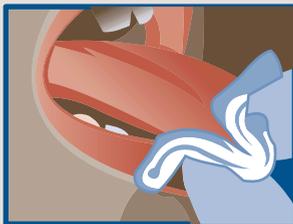
Your health provider will —



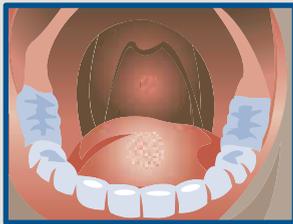
1. Ask you to remove your dentures.
2. Check your face, neck, ears, and lips to look for any lumps. Use their hands to feel under your chin and on both sides of your neck.



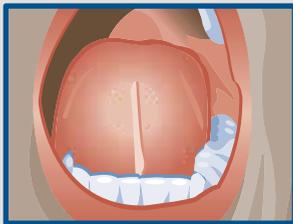
3. Look and feel the inside of your lips and cheeks for red or white spots.



4. Ask you to stick out your tongue and will look for red or white spots on your tongue and hold your tongue with a piece of gauze to see the sides and under the tongue.



5. Check the roof of your mouth, the back of your throat, and the floor of your mouth.



6. Put his/her finger under your tongue and the other finger under your chin, and press down to check for lumps.



What Causes Oral Cancer?

- Cigarettes, cigars, snuff, spit tobacco and pipes
- Alcohol
- Unprotected sun (lip)
- Certain viruses
- Lack of fruits and vegetables
- Marijuana

Early Signs of Oral Cancer

- Sores that last longer than two weeks
- White, red or mixed patches
- A sore that bleeds



Rhode Island Department of Health
Oral Health Program
Office of Primary Care, Room 408
Three Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
401-222-1171
www.health.ri.gov

Donald L. Carcieri
Governor

Patricia A. Nolan, MD, MPH
Director of Health

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