



Oral Cancer—A Silent Killer!

The Silent Killer:

Oral cancer is not a disease on everyone's "radar." But it has an alarming growth rate. Approximately 35,000 new cases of oral cancer are diagnosed each year in the United States. This percentage has increased 20% since 2001. 25% of those diagnosed with oral cancer will die of the disease.

The Startling Statistics:

Oral cancer is **more** deadly than breast cancer, cervical cancer and prostate cancer and **kills one person every hour of every day**. Because the signs and symptoms of oral cancer are often missed by the naked eye, the disease is usually detected in its late stage, when the mortality rate is 50%. When found early, oral cancer patients have nearly a 90% survival rate.

A New Reason for Concern:

Once associated only with heavy smokers or drinkers, Oral Cancer is being found increasingly in non-smokers and non-drinkers. Exposure to the **HPV-16 and HPV-18 virus** (*human papilloma virus*) is the fastest growing risk factor for oral cancer. This is the same virus that is responsible for the majority of cervical cancer in women. The virus presents a 5X increase in occurrence of Oral Cancer under the age 40.

Oral Cancer

- ◇ A person dies from oral cancer every hour
- ◇ Approximately 35,000 new cases of oral cancer are diagnosed each year in the U.S.
- ◇ Over 40% of those diagnosed will die within five years.
- ◇ The high mortality rate is high due to late stage diagnosis.
- ◇ The death rate in the US is higher than that of cancers which we hear about routinely such as breast, cervical, Hodgkin's, prostate, liver, kidney, thyroid and colon.
- ◇ Exposure to the HPV-16 virus (human papilloma virus) is the fastest growing risk fact for oral cancer.
- ◇ 90% of oral cancer occurs in patients 45 years or older.
- ◇ An estimated 7,550 oral cancer patients died in 2007 (5,180 men, 2,370 women)
- ◇ 90% of oral cancers are "squamous cell carcinomas"
- ◇ Smoking, using chewing tobacco and heavy drinking are the primer risk factors. However, 25% of all people diagnosed with oral cancer have NONE of these risk factors.
- ◇ Oral Cancer often starts as a tiny, unnoticed white or red spot or sore that can occur anywhere in the mouth. The most frequent oral cancer sites are the tongue, floor of the mouth, soft palate, tissue areas in the back of the tongue, lips and gums. When discovered 65-75% are in stage 3 or 4.

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*References:

CDC's Advisory Committee
Oral Cancer Foundation
National Cancer Institute
American Cancer Society
American Dental Association