Oral and Oropharyngeal (throat) Cancers Are on the Rise in Canada

The Canadian Cancer Society Estimated in 2015 that:
• Approximately 12 Canadians would be diagnosed each day with oral or throat cancer
• Approximately 3 people would die every day from oral cancer
• Approximately twice as many men as women would be diagnosed with throat or oral cancer

Reduce Your Risks
• Limit alcohol use (less than 1 alcoholic drink a day for women; less than 2 alcoholic drinks a day for men). Read more on the Canadian Cancer Society’s “Prevention & Screening/Alcohol” web pages at www.cancer.ca
• Do not use tobacco products. Your dental hygienist can help you quit by offering tobacco cessation strategies during your next appointment.
• Protect yourself from human papillomavirus (HPV) infections by getting vaccinated. HPV DNA has been identified in two-thirds of oropharyngeal cancers.
• Protect your lips from the sun by limiting exposure and wearing SPF-containing lip balm when outside.
• Make healthy food choices. Consult Canada’s Food Guide for more information.
• Visit your dental hygienist regularly. Dental hygienists can recognize abnormal tissue changes and will refer you to a specialist for follow-up. Oral cancer, if caught early, can be successfully treated.

Signs and Symptoms
• Changes to the colour of your gums, cheeks or tongue
• Mouth lumps, bumps or sores that do not heal within 14 days
• Persistent sore throat or cough or a change in your voice
• Difficulty swallowing or a feeling that something is stuck in your throat
• Lumps in the neck (even those that don’t bother you)
• Mouth or ear pain in combination with any of the other symptoms listed