

# Oral Cancer Screening

## For Today's Population

Oral cancer is often not noticed in its early stages because it can develop without pain or symptoms. If the cancer is detected early, and before it has spread to other tissues, the 5-year survival rate may be as high as 90%.

Dental professionals could potentially detect about 84% of the number of new oral cancer cases.<sup>1</sup>

1. Laronde DM, Hislop TG, Elwood JM, Rosin MP. Oral cancer: Just the facts. *J Can Dent Assoc.* 2008;74(3):269-72.



### Extraoral Assessment Head & Neck

The dental hygienist examines and palpates the following areas:



1. Palpate jaw joint for clicking, tenderness or restricted movement when the mouth is opened and closed.



6. Palpate supraclavicular lymph nodes above both sides of the collar bone.



2. Palpate the parotid salivary gland and the masseter muscle in the cheeks for swelling or tenderness.



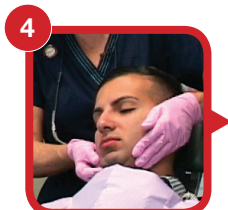
7. Palpate occipital lymph nodes at the base of the skull.



3. Palpate submental lymph nodes under the chin area.



8. Palpate postauricular lymph nodes behind the ear.



4. Palpate submandibular lymph nodes under the angle of the jaw.



9. Palpate preauricular lymph nodes in front of the ear.



5. Palpate cervical lymph nodes along both sides of the neck.



10. Palpate thyroid gland for restricted movement during swallowing.



# What To Look For...

- A red or white patch in the mouth
- A lump or thickening of tissue in the mouth, neck or face
- Sore in the mouth, including under a denture or an appliance, which bleeds easily or does not heal within 14 days
- Numbness in the mouth or face
- Persistent earache in only one ear
- Continuous sore throat or persistent infection that lasts for a long time or recurs
- Hoarseness or change in speech
- Pain or difficulty swallowing, speaking, chewing or moving the jaw or tongue
- Wart-like masses in the mouth
- A lump in the throat or feeling like something is caught in the throat



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## Intraoral Assessment Lips & Mouth

The dental hygienist pays close attention to changes in colour, size, and texture when examining the following areas:



1 Lips: examine with finger and thumb.



4 Gingiva or gums: look for red or white patches or swelling, hardness or tenderness.



7 While the tongue is touching the roof of the mouth, visually examine and palpate the surface for any swelling, red or white patches or hard spots.



2 Upper and lower lip: examine the gingiva or gums and inside of the lip for any changes.



5 When the tongue is straight out, palpate and visually examine the upper surface, looking as far back as can be seen for any swelling, texture or colour changes.



8 While the tongue is elevated, visually examine and palpate the area bimanually for any swelling, hard spots or changes in colour or texture.



3 Inside of the cheeks: look for red or white patches or swelling, hardness or tenderness.



6 Holding the tongue to the side, examine each side for any red or white patches, and palpate for tenderness, swelling or hard spots.



9 Have the client take a deep breath in through the mouth and say "aah." Depress the tongue and examine the throat and palate for signs of swelling, texture or colour change.