



*Susan Cotten* BSDH, RDH, OMT  
Oral Cancer Coach, Speaker, Author

# *Speaker Packet*



# The "Cotten Method"

## Reduce Liability, Gain Confidence in Screening, Increase Early Detection

Susan Cotten BSDH, RDH, OMT, is recognized in dentistry for her expertise in oral and oropharyngeal cancer, screening, and the Human Papillomavirus. Her lectures and workshops help dental and medical professionals to be confident, thorough, and efficient when screening and educating about oral cancer and reducing their liability. *Susan shares current evidence and research in oral and oropharyngeal cancer using the **four pillars of screening from The "Cotten Method"***

*1. Etiologies 2. Risk 3. Signs and Symptoms 4. Hands-on Screening*



Select from her presentations below or contact Susan about a customized presentation and/or workshop for your attendees, DSO group, health system, or school.

## *Presentations*



### ORAL CANCER SCREENING

"It's more than grasping  
the tongue"

#### PART ONE (pillars 1-3)

Etiologies/HPV, Risk Factors,  
Signs and Symptoms



### ORAL CANCER SCREENING

"It's more than grasping  
the tongue"

#### PART TWO (pillar 4)

Best practices of the intraoral  
and extroral evaluation



### ORAL CANCER SCREENING

"It's more than grasping  
the tongue"

#### WORKSHOP

hands-on training



# ORAL CANCER SCREENING

## "It's More Than Grasping the Tongue" Part One

**Do you struggle with educating patients about HPV and oral cancer?**

**What is your office culture around oral cancer?**

**Ever delayed a referral because a patient wasn't perceived to be at risk or their persistent symptom didn't seem concerning?**

Dentistry is consistently changing and in recent years research, evidence, and technology are bringing rapid changes in all areas. At times it can be daunting to keep teams updated, clinicians calibrated, and patients educated. The good news is oral cancer is a part of that ever-changing world of dentistry.

Current evidence reveals that there are known signs and symptoms of oral and oropharyngeal cancer that may be present before anything is identified with the naked eye or by palpation. Similarly, there are additional risk factors that may increase the risk for oral cancer.

Attendees will gain an appreciation for an updated health history, verbal inquiry of risk factors and persistent signs and symptoms, to help aid in the screening and early detection.

This course is a journey into the first three, science based, pillars of screening in the "Cotten Method" - etiologies, risk factors, and signs and symptoms. Utilizing current evidence, oral cancer survivor stories, and awareness of liability concerns, attendees will gain a deep understanding of why the three pillars are essential in today's thorough screening, and why screening is more than grasping the tongue.



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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- List etiologies of oral and oropharyngeal cancer
- Discuss HPV, HPV transmission, HPV vaccination.
- Recognize potential signs and symptoms of oral and oropharyngeal cancer
- Name risk factors of oral and oropharyngeal cancer
- Articulate importance of an oral cancer risk assessment and an updated health history
- Gain a deeper understanding for why a thorough screening today includes a risk assessment and inquiry of persistent signs and symptoms, and the role of periodontitis in the risk for oral cancer.

**Suggested audience:** Dentists, hygienists, assistants, dental teams, physicians, physicians assistants, nurses, medical teams.  
**Suggested formats:** Partial day, up to half day when combined with part two.

# ORAL CANCER SCREENING

## "It's more than grasping the tongue" PART TWO

**Ever wish you were more confident when performing the intraoral and extraoral evaluation?**

**What specific parts of the screening are you unsure about?**

**"I've never had this done before" is your team calibrated?**

Time constraints, a lack of confidence when screening, production-driven procedures taking precedence, or the belief a patient isn't at risk are reported reasons the oral and oropharyngeal cancer evaluation isn't performed thoroughly or at all. Sometimes there is no reason, it just isn't performed. Dentists and hygienists are at varying stages of skill and confidence in screening. The purpose of this course is to meet providers where they are, support them in achieving confidence and skill in this life-saving procedure. When a clinician is skilled and confident in performing a procedure it is more likely to be done, and done efficiently.

This is the 4th pillar of screening in the "Cotten Method". Susan will utilize her comprehensive screening video, and photos, to show what a thorough intraoral and extraoral evaluation entails, discussing provider and patient positioning for optimal visualization, and techniques for palpation. Utilizing Susan's training as a Myofunctional Therapist, attendees will learn Mallampati Score and Tonsil Grade recognition and documentation, and why these are important in the oropharyngeal evaluation and airway assessment. Liability concerns and team calibration will be addressed.



### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- List components of a thorough extraoral and intraoral evaluation
- Identify and document Mallampati Score and Tonsil Grade and why these are important
- Discuss components for thorough documentation of the intraoral and extraoral evaluation
- Name the anatomical structures examined in the oropharyngeal evaluation
- Review possible liabilities for providers in oral cancer and protocols to aid in reducing liability





# ORAL CANCER SCREENING

## "It's more than grasping the tongue" WORKSHOP

**Wish you could practice clinical skills in the hands-on screening?**

**What part of the hands-on screening do you want to feel more confident performing?**

**Unsure about assessing the thyroid?**

Similar to part two of "It's more than grasping the tongue", the purpose of this workshop is to meet providers where they are, support them in achieving confidence and skill in this life-saving procedure.

The workshop provides an opportunity for hands-on work in a supportive environment with other clinicians seeking to increase their skill and confidence.

This workshop will utilize Susan's screening video and photos as visual teaching tools. Attendees will partner up and don appropriate PPE to practice on one another. Susan will don appropriate PPE to join in the fun, helping attendees with their specific concerns by demonstrating on attendees, as needed and time allows, so they can experience the first hand "feel" of what they want to be more confident in performing. It's been Susan's experience that this can give an attendee that "Ah Ha" moment in learning.

Attendees are to bring their loupes with a light and face shield.



### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Demonstrate a comprehensive intraoral and extraoral evaluation
- List components of a thorough extraoral evaluation
- List components of a thorough intraoral evaluation
- Identify and document Mallampati Score
- Identify and document Tonsil Grade
- Name liabilities for dental professionals in oral cancer
- Recognize best practices in pressure for palpation extra and intra orally



*Excellence is defined as the quality of being outstanding or extremely good.  
Susan's mission is to help providers achieve excellence in screening.*

**Susan is dentistry's oral cancer coach!** She lives and breathes early detection of oral cancer, a thorough screening on every patient, and reducing liability.

There was a time in Susan's dental hygiene career that this was not the case, she knew very little about oral cancer and was neither confident nor thorough when performing an oral cancer screening. It was two events within the same week, a heartbreaking conversation with her favorite patient who is an oral cancer survivor and being selected for Donny Osmond's Make a Difference program, which acted as catalysts for her passion and deep dive into oral cancer.

Susan is the founder and CEO of **Oral Cancer Consulting**, she developed the "**Cotten Method**", a dental practice system helping providers to be confident in screening, aiding in early detection, and reducing liability. Susan believes the entire dental team plays a role in raising awareness, educating patients, and early detection. and she helps teams establish a positive oral cancer culture.

Susan is a consultant and Dental Workgroup Lead for HPV Free Colorado where she develops and delivers training on HPV, the HPV vaccine, and HPV oropharyngeal cancer. She is a board member and oral cancer screening coordinator for Colorado Mission of Mercy, Regional Coordinator and RDH Advisory Board member for The Oral Cancer Foundation, KOL for several dental companies, a published author in RDH Magazine, DentistryToday.com, and DentistryIQ.

In 2020 she received the Ethyl Covington Award from the Colorado Dental Hygiene Association/CODHA, in 2018 a recipient of the Sunstar RDH Award of Distinction and CODHA Outstanding Contribution Award. Susan founded MAD(Make A Difference) for Healthy Smiles as a 2010-2011 member of Donny Osmond's Make a Difference program, and received volunteer of the year from the Oral Cancer Foundation in 2011.





# "One of the best classes for screening I have seen in 19 years."

"Thank you for a very informative class! I'm going in Monday morning and implementing what I've learned. **Best class of the week!**"

"I **loved** that she gave a hands on demonstration of her extraoral examination and **also showed photos and videos of what needs to be done**"

***"The information presented where it can be implemented in the office immediately"***

*"Fun, enthusiastic, loved her presentation"*



***"I practice hygiene differently because of you, and I'm proud of my oral cancer screenings because of your knowledge you shared with me. I wanted to thank you. You are with me every day. Thank you for your influence in my life, Susan!"*** **Dani, RDH**

"Thank you Susan for an informative session in our office on your "Cotten Method" for screening. **Your straight forward systematic approach is thorough and easy to implement**"

*"Excellent resources and speaker intimate knowledge"*

**"We are so grateful for your hands on course and workshop yesterday. It was a wonderful way to perfect our oral cancer screening technique. I hope all dental offices opt in for this new version of The Cotten Method."**

Jennifer Geiselhofer RDH  
owner - Dental at Your Door



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"Hello Susan, my hygiene team and I attended your course in Dallas-RDH UOR last week and **were inspired to be better** at oral cancer screening, better hygienists, and better humans. **Thank you for moving us!** We offered to have free oral cancer screenings at our Harvest Festival, the Dr's think it's super cool and are helping us plan it as we speak. **We loved your lecture!** You brought us to tears" **Keira RDH, BS**

## Past Presentations

- Alliance for HPV Free Colorado (multiple)
- American Dental Association (multiple)
- American Dental Hygiene Association
- Beyond the Prophylaxis
- Beyond Oral Health (multiple)
- CE Zoom
- Colorado Dental Hygiene Association (multiple)
- Colorado HPV Task Force
- Colorado Northwestern Community College (multiple)
- Community College of Denver (multiple)
- Concorde Dental Hygiene School, Colorado (multiple)
- Dental At Your Door
- Dental Codeology Master Class
- Dentistry's Got Talent
- Dental Masters CE
- Intermountain West HPV Vaccination Coalition
- Jumpstart Speaker Showcase
- Laramie County Community College (multiple)
- Montana Dental Association
- MouthWatch
- Nevada Dental Hygiene Association
- New Jersey Dental Hygiene Association
- Peebles Prosthetics
- RDH Under One Roof (multiple)
- South Dakota Academy of Family Physicians
- Utah Dental Hygiene Association
- University of Colorado School of Dental Medicine (multiple)
- University of Hawaii Manoa Dental Hygiene
- University of Hawaii Maui College Dental Hygiene (multiple)
- Wyoming Dental Hygiene Association

## Articles and Podcasts

- "Skin Cancer as a Dental Hygienist" DentistryIQ
- "Oral Cancer Awareness Month Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic" DentistryToday.com
- "The state of oral and oropharyngeal cancer screening in our profession" RDH magazine
- "How to perform a head and neck oral/oropharyngeal cancer screening" RDH magazine
- "Removing the Stigma of HPV" RDH magazine
- "Skin Cancer Screening: A Dental Hygienist's Life-Saving Responsibility" RDH magazine
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- IgniteDA podcast: with Kevin Henry
- Your Dental Top 5 podcast: with Amanda Hill (multiple)
- Dentistry's Growing with Grace podcast: with Grace Rizza
- Women in Dentistry podcast: with MJ Hanlon
- DSO Hygiene Excellence podcast: with Sarah Varney and Christine Diehl
- Tale of Two Hygienists podcast: Student Focused Presents: The Importance of Oral Cancer and HPV Conversations with Patients
- Radio: Rush to Reason (multiple)

## Awards

- Ethyl Covington Award - Colorado Dental Hygiene Association 2020
- Sunstar RDH Award of Distinction 2018
- Outstanding Contribution Award - Colorado Dental Hygiene Association 2018
- Outstanding Volunteer - Oral Cancer Foundation 2011



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