

BARTH FAMILY DENTISTRY, PSC

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Facts About Oral Cancer

- * An estimated 30,200 new oral cancer cases will be diagnosed every year.
- * Although the percentage of deaths has been decreasing since 1980, nearly 8000 Americans die annually from oral cancer.
- * Smoking in combination with heavy alcohol consumption (30+ drinks a week) is the primary risk factor for oral cancer
- * However, 25% of oral cancer occur in people who do not smoke, do not drink and do not have other risk factors.
- * Additional risk factors include, smokeless tobacco, heavy sun exposure and poor oral hygiene
- * Oral Cancer is more likely to strike after age 40 but does occur in all ages!
- * Oral cancer can affect any areas of the oral cavity including, the lips, gums tissues, cheek lining, tongue, hard and soft palate, and the jaw bones.

*** Symptoms of oral cancer include: (Only one item listed below can be a cancer)**

- A painless spot that does not heal. (This is the most common in early detection).
- A sore that bleeds easily and does not heal.
- A color change of the oral tissue. (red spot, white spot or any color change)
- A lump, thickening, rough spot, crust, or small eroded areas.
- Pain, tenderness, numbness, or tingling anywhere in the mouth or on the lips.
- Difficulty chewing, swallowing, speaking, or moving the jaw or tongue.
- A change in the way the teeth fit together.

*** Common normal tissue sometimes can mimic cancer and the only way to tell the difference between a variation of normal tissue and cancer is to do a biopsy and obtain a pathological report as viewed under a microscope.**

**** It is extremely important for those individuals wearing complete dentures to be seen by your dentist at least 1 time a year to check the health of the oral cavity and to screen for oral cancer.**