

Facts about...

MOUTH CANCER



What is HPV?

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common viral infection that's passed between people through skin-to-skin contact. Most infections are fought off by the body's immune system and cause no symptoms.

HPV and Mouth Cancer HPV-16, the same virus associated with cervical cancer, is also linked to cancer in the younger people in good health and no history of either smoking or drinking alcohol. These HPV cancers are the fastest increasing type of mouth cancer.

Fortunately, HPV mouth cancers appear to be more responsive to treatment and the survival rate is much better than non-HPV mouth cancer.

HPV mouth cancers tend to appear in the back of the mouth area such as the back of the tongue, back of the throat (oropharynx) and the tonsil area while non-HPV related mouth cancers involve other parts of the mouth. HPV mouth cancers often have a strawberry-like surface appearance.

Getting HPV

There is a greater risk associated with a history of an increased number of lifetime sexual and/or oral sex partners, and for men an earlier age at first sexual intercourse. Sexually active adults have a 75 percent chance of acquiring HPV during their lifetimes. You may never know you are infected, as there are no symptoms.

Fortunately, HPV infections are successfully fought off by the body's immune system and the infection often resolves without treatment, even infection with high-risk strains of HPV.

However, in some people, the infection can persist or reappear. People with persistent HPV-16 oral infection are at much higher risk for oropharynx cancer.

Vaccination

By vaccinating against HPV before becoming sexually active, the risk of cancer when older is reduced. Since September 2019 boys in school year 8 are offered the free HPV. Prior to this only teenage girls received the vaccine, with parental consent, which protects against cervical cancer.

“HPV is a common infection affecting 8 in 10 people at some point in their lives.”

This step is likely to prevent around 2,000 cases of cancer in men each year caused by HPV infection. These are cancers of the anus, penis, head and neck. Vaccinating boys will also reduce the number of cervical cancer cases by reducing the risk of infection in women who missed out on vaccination.

What is Mouth Cancer

This is the general term given to the variety of malignant tumours that develop in the mouth, (oral cavity). The Mouth Cancer Foundation promotes awareness of all head and neck cancers i.e. throat (pharynx), voice box (larynx), salivary glands, nose, nasal, sinuses, lips and skin.

Symptoms

- An ulcer or white or red patch anywhere in the mouth that does not heal within 3 weeks.
- A lump or swelling anywhere in the mouth, jaw or neck that persists for more than 3 weeks.
- Difficulty swallowing, chewing or moving the jaw or tongue.
- Numbness of tongue or other area of the mouth.
- A feeling that something is caught in the throat.
- A chronic sore throat or hoarseness that persists more than 6 weeks.
- Unexplained loosening of teeth.

Risk Factors

- Tobacco use is the main cause of mouth cancer.
- Drinking alcohol to excess can increase risks four fold.
- Drinking and smoking together can make mouth cancer up to 30 times more likely to develop.
- Poor diet and social deprivation is linked to a third of all cancer cases.
- The Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), transmitted through oral sex, could overtake tobacco and alcohol as the main risk factor within the next decade.
- Exposure to the sun is a cause of skin cancer which can affect the lips and face.

Facts About Mouth Cancer

1 person every **3 HOURS** is lost to Mouth cancer

Over **8700** new cases in the UK each year

Each year **2700+** lives are lost to Mouth Cancer

Worldwide Mouth Cancer affects **650,000** per year

Mouth Cancer is **TWICE** as common in men

78% of cases occur in the **Over 55** age group

Incidence has risen by **49%** over the past 10 years

5 year **SURVIVAL** rate has hardly improved in last few decades

To make a donation or for FREE information visit www.mouthcancerfoundation.org

Advice Line: 01924 950 950 • Head Office +44 (0) 208 940 5680
Alternatively you can email info@mouthcancerfoundation.org

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