

Oral Health Care Advice For People Receiving Cancer Treatment

- Gently brush teeth, gums and tongue with a soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste after every meal and at bedtime. If brushing hurts soften toothbrush bristles in warm water
- Floss teeth gently every day.
- Follow instructions for fluoride gel applications
- Avoid mouthwashes containing alcohol
- Several times a day, rinse the mouth with a baking soda and salt solution, followed by a plain water rinse. (Use 1/4 teaspoon of baking soda and 1/8 teaspoon of salt in 1 cup of warm water)
- Exercise the jaw muscles 3 times a day to prevent and treat stiffness from radiation treatment
- Avoid spicy or acidic foods, toothpicks, tobacco products and alcohol
- If dry mouth is a problem, try the following:
 - Sip water frequently*
 - Suck ice cubes or use sugar-free gum*
 - If appropriate use saliva substitute spray or gel*
 - Avoid lemon glycerine swabs*



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



Oral Health
Matters

Oral Health and Cancer Sláinte Bhéil & Ailse



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Oral Cancer

Oral Cancer can affect any area of the mouth including the lips, cheeks, tongue and throat. It usually occurs in people over the age of 40 but can develop at any age. Smoking and alcohol increases the risk of oral cancer and if smoking and alcohol are consumed together the risk is even greater. Over exposure to sunlight can also increase the risk of cancer of the lips. Oral cancer can occur whether you have your own teeth or wear false teeth, it's important to visit your dentist at least once a year.

USE LIP BALM THAT CONTAINS SUNSCREEN.



Signs and Symptoms

- A non healing sore, irritation, lump or white / red persistent patch in the mouth, lip or throat that has not healed after two weeks
- Numbness in the tongue or other areas of the mouth
- A feeling that something is caught in your throat

- Difficulty or pain with chewing or swallowing
- Swelling of your jaw that causes dentures to fit poorly or become uncomfortable
- Pain in the ear
- A change in the voice

The symptoms listed occur in conditions other than oral cancer. It is important to see your dentist or doctor if you have any of these symptoms, so that a correct diagnosis is made.



Cancer Treatment

For most people, it is important to have a complete dental check-up before cancer treatment begins.

Treatment for any type of cancer can give rise to mouth problems in various forms and degrees of severity, depending on the individual and the cancer treatment.