

How Can Bad Oral Health Lead to Oral Cancer?



Those with teeth and gums that are in poor condition are more susceptible to human papillomavirus, which can lead to the development of oral cancer. A [Red Deer dentist](#) can tell you more about maintaining perfect oral health and avoiding developing this condition.

What is Oral Cancer?

Cancer happens because of the uncontrolled growth of cells that damage and invade the surrounding tissues in the body. Oral cancer can occur in any part of the mouth, including the sinuses, tongue, throat, floor of the mouth, cheeks, and lips. Cancer may appear as a persistent lump or sore that does not go away. If not caught early, oral cancer can be life-threatening and falls under the category of head and neck cancers.

What Are the Symptoms of Oral Cancer?

While symptoms of oral cancer may vary, here are some of the more common symptoms to watch out for:

- Lumps, sore patches, or inflammation in the mouth
- Unusual, persistent bleeding from the mouth
- Tenderness, pain, or numbness in any area of the face, neck, or mouth
- Challenges chewing, swallowing, or speaking
- A sudden change in your voice, such as persistent hoarseness
- Unexplained weight loss

If you experience any abnormal dental symptoms, it is always a good idea to visit a dentist near you.

The Link Between Poor Oral Hygiene and Oral Cancer

Oral health plays a major role in the human body. The mouth is the primary site for human communication and is the entry for both the gastrointestinal tract and respiratory system. Poor oral hygiene can put your oral health at risk and eventually lead to oral cancer. Oral cancer is the fifth most common form of cancer in men and the seventh most common in women. A recent study revealed that those who have gingival bleeding while brushing and skip out on their regular dental checkups are much more at risk for oral cancer than those who ensure that they attend their professional dental cleanings and checkups. Additionally, the study revealed that those who brush their teeth twice a day have a lower risk of developing oral cancer than those who never brush their teeth.

Additional Risk Factors

Although poor oral health is a culprit when it comes to oral cancer, other risk factors also play a role. Those who smoke are six times more at risk of developing some form of oral cancer than those who do not partake in this activity. Additionally, those who chew tobacco are up to 50 times more likely to develop oral cancer in their gums, cheeks, and lips.

Those who drink alcohol in excess are also at a higher risk of developing oral cancer than those who abstain from alcohol. Other risk factors include high sun exposure, HPV virus, and a family history of cancer.

How to Prevent Oral Cancer?

Once you understand the leading causes of this disease, it becomes easier to take the right steps to prevent its occurrence. Here are some strategies that you can implement to prevent oral cancer:

- **Visit your dentist regularly:** ensure that you visit your dentist at least once every six months for a professional dental cleaning and checkup. Your dentist can perform a quick and painless oral cancer screening and catch any abnormalities early, giving you the best chance at successful treatment and survival.
- **Maintain excellent oral hygiene:** this means brushing and flossing regularly to prevent the accumulation of harmful bacteria in your mouth. If you notice any signs of gum disease or decay, seek treatment immediately. If you happen to lose a tooth, find a replacement as soon as possible.
- **Adopt a healthy lifestyle:** change your habits to prevent oral cancer. Ensure that you eat a balanced diet that is rich in fruits and vegetables. Avoid excessive alcohol consumption and completely cut out tobacco products.

When you are in the sun, use SPF on your face and lips.

- **Perform self-examinations:** it is recommended that you perform a self-examination of your oral cavity at least once a month. Use a mirror and bright light to check your lips, gums, inner cheeks, the floor of your mouth, and palate for any lumps, discoloration, sores, or abnormal patches. If you notice any unexpected lesions or changes, make an appointment with your dentist right away.

Oral Cancer Screenings Near You

If you would like to know more about oral cancer and what you can do to prevent it, start by booking an appointment with your dentist for an oral cancer screening. This painless and quick session will set your mind at ease and can even end up saving your life. Your dentist can educate you on lifestyle habits that will keep your mouth healthy and let you know what to look out for when it comes to oral cancer. Please do not hesitate to contact your dental clinic and schedule an appointment today.