DENTAL CARE AND ORAL CANCER

Taking Care of Your Oral Health

Detecting and preventing oral cancer

Dental care is an important part of your overall health. Regular dental visits help keep your teeth and gums healthy and can catch any problems early, before they become more serious issues. In fact, your dentist can even detect pre-cancerous problems and oral cancer early, when they are most treatable.
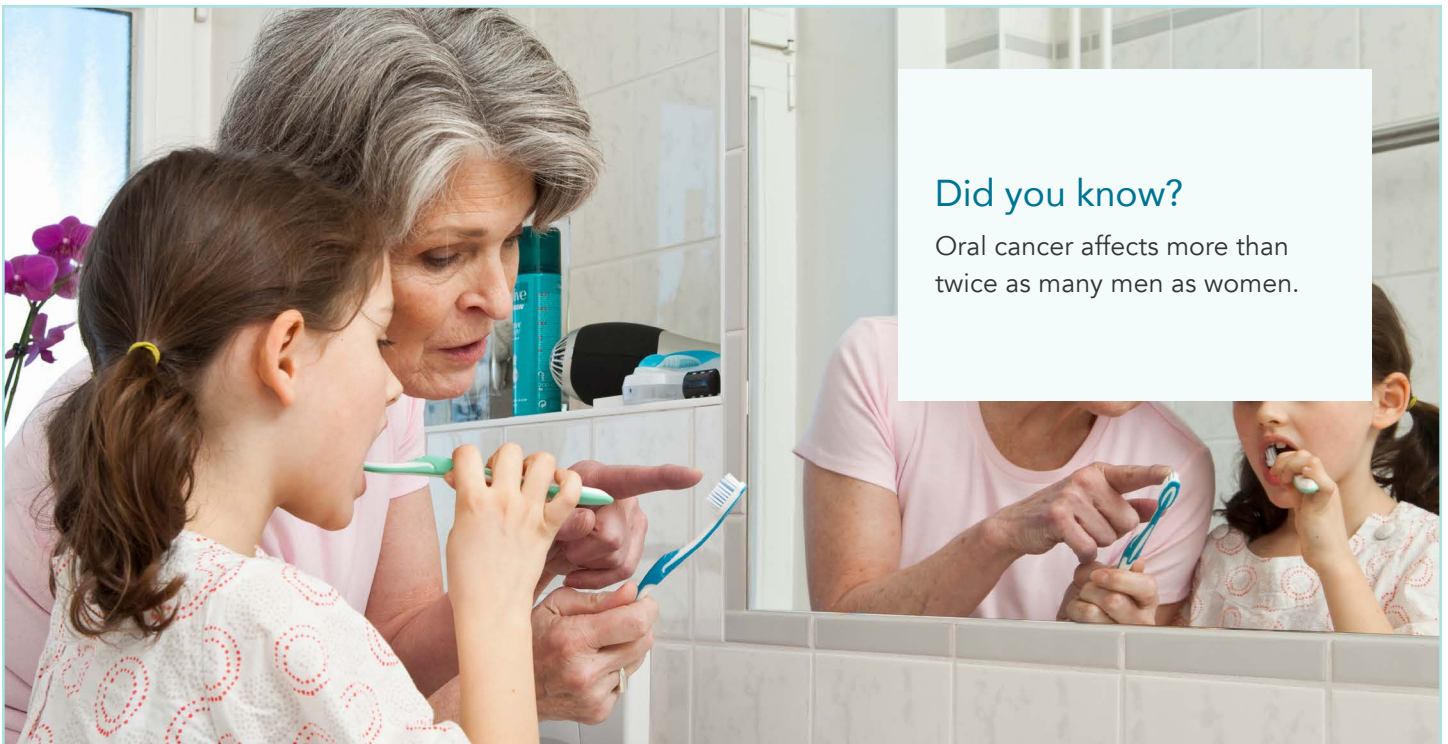
Oral cancer includes cancers of the lips, tongue, mouth and throat. It often appears as a growth or sore that doesn't go away. An oral cancer screening is an important part of each dental checkup. This simple screening includes questions about your health and an examination of areas inside and outside your mouth.

Possible signs of oral cancer include:

- A mouth sore that bleeds easily or doesn't heal
- Mouth, teeth or ear pain
- A lump or thickening of your lips, mouth or cheek
- Numbness of your tongue, lips, mouth or neck
- A white or red patch anywhere inside your mouth
- A sore throat or feeling of something caught in your throat

- Problems chewing, swallowing or moving your tongue or jaw
- Swelling or pain in your jaw
- Loosening of your teeth
- Changes in your voice, bite or denture fit
- A lump in your neck or back of your throat
- Weight loss

Oral health tips:

- Visit your dentist at least twice a year to have your teeth and gums cleaned.
- Tell your dentist about any health problems you have or medications you take.
- Brush your teeth twice a day with a soft-bristled toothbrush.
- Floss your teeth daily.
- If you wear dentures, clean them each day. Take them out of your mouth for at least four hours every day. It's best to remove them at night.
- If you smoke, talk to your doctor about ways to quit.
- Tell your dentist about any changes in your oral health.

Did you know?
Oral cancer affects more than twice as many men as women.

Regular dental checkups help keep you healthy.