

# OPEN UP AND SAY “PREVENTION”



## Know the potential signs of oral cancer

You can get cancer anywhere in your body. Even in your mouth and throat. Most people who get oral cancer are over 40 years old and smoke or chew tobacco.<sup>1</sup> But oral cancer can strike at any age – whether you use tobacco or not.

### More facts about mouth and throat cancer<sup>2</sup>

- › More than 45,000 people in the U.S. are diagnosed each year
- › Nearly 9,000 people in the U.S. die from these diseases each year
- › About 57% of those diagnosed survive more than five years

### Open up. It's good for your health.

Your dentist should check for oral cancer during your regular dental visit. Your dentist will look for suspicious spots and feel for lumps in and around your mouth. This may include the roof of your mouth, inside your cheeks, under your tongue and other areas of the head and neck.

### Take a closer look

The most common symptom of oral cancer is a flat, painless white or red spot or a small sore. In many cases, having a spot or sore in your mouth is harmless. But it's important that you tell your dentist so that he/she can decide if further investigation is needed.

Some dentists are using a newer, simple technique to help detect cancerous or precancerous cells, in which the dentist uses a small brush to gather cell samples of a suspicious area. The specimen is then sent to a laboratory for analysis. This oral brush biopsy procedure is easy and can be done in the dentist's chair with very little or no pain. The results may help determine your need for a surgical biopsy or other follow-up.<sup>3</sup>

### Spotting potential signs of oral cancer<sup>1</sup>

#### Look for a:

- › Red or white patch
- › Sore that bleeds easily or does not heal
- › Thick or hard spot or a lump
- › Roughened or crusted area

#### Other signs of oral cancer may include:<sup>1</sup>

- › Numbness
- › Pain
- › Tenderness
- › A change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite down

Tell your dentist if you have any problems chewing, swallowing, speaking or moving your tongue or jaw.

**Routine preventive care can help to find and treat cancers of the mouth and throat. Visit your dentist regularly for cleanings and exams. And see your dentist immediately if you have any symptoms that worry you.**

**Together, all the way.<sup>®</sup>**



1. American Cancer Society. Oral Cavity and Oropharyngeal Cancer. (2014, July). Retrieved December 23, 2016, from <http://www.cancer.org/acs/groups/cid/documents/webcontent/003128-pdf.pdf>

2. Oral Cancer Foundation. Oral Cancer Facts. (2016, December 14). Retrieved December 23, 2016, from <http://oralcancerfoundation.org/facts/>

3. American Society of Clinical Oncology. Oral and Oropharyngeal Cancer Guide. (2016, July). Retrieved December 23, 2016, from <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/oral-and-oropharyngeal-cancer/diagnosis>.

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