What is Mouth Cancer?
This is the general term given to the variety of malignant head and neck tumours that develop in the mouth, (oral cavity). However, we at the Mouth Cancer Foundation promote awareness of all head and neck cancers ie: throat (pharynx), voice box (larynx), salivary glands, nose, nasal sinuses and skin.

About Mouth Cancer
- Mouth cancer is on the increase.
- Every day about 5 people in the UK die of the disease.
- Over 8000 people are diagnosed with mouth cancer each year.
- Worldwide, the disease affects 650,000 people a year.
- Tobacco use is still considered the main cause of mouth cancer.
- Drinking to excess can increase the risk of mouth cancer four-fold.
- Smokers and drinkers are up to 30 times more likely to develop mouth cancer.
- Mouth cancer is twice as common in men than in women.
- People over the age of 40 are more likely to be diagnosed, though more young people are now being affected.
- Poor diet is linked to a third of all cancer cases.
- Experts suggest the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is another main risk factor.

Symptoms include
- 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 in swallowing, chewing or moving the jaw or tongue.
- Numbness of the 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.
**Self-examination**

If you are 16 or over examine yourself once a month.

This 2 minute self check could **SAVE YOUR LIFE.**

To **Bite Back at Mouth Cancer** the following will be required:

- **Mirror**
- **Good light source**
- **Clean fingers**

At each step you are looking and feeling for anything unusual especially any lumps, red or white patches, changes in colour or texture or lingering ulcers.

Follow this simple check list

1. **Face**
   - Look at the whole face
   - Are there any swellings you haven’t noticed before?

2. **Neck**
   - Run the fingers under your jaw and feel along the large muscle either side of neck using the balls of your fingers.
   - Are there any swellings?
   - Does everything feel the same on both sides?

3. **Lips**
   - Use your index, middle finger and thumb to feel the inside of your mouth.
   - Pull your upper lip upwards and bottom lip downwards
   - Look inside for any sores or changes in colour.

4. **Gums**
   - Use your thumb and forefinger
   - Examine your gums feeling around the gum for anything unusual.

5. **Cheeks**
   - Open your mouth and pull your cheeks away, one side at a time, with your finger to look inside
   - Look for any red or white patches.
   - Does everything feel the same on both sides?

6. **Tongue**
   - Gently pull out your tongue and look at one side first and then the other
   - Look for any swelling, ulcers or change in colour.
   - Examine the underside of your tongue by lifting the tip of your tongue to the roof of your mouth.

7. **Floor of the mouth**
   - Lift your tongue up and look underneath at the floor of your mouth
   - Look for any colour changes that are unusual.
   - Gently press your finger along the floor of your mouth and under your tongue
   - Feel for any lumps, swellings or ulcers.

8. **Roof of Mouth**
   - Tilt back your head and open your mouth wide to inspect the roof of your mouth
   - Look to see if there are changes in colour or ulcers.
   - Check for changes in texture with your finger.

**Mouth Cancer Foundation**

www.mouthcancerfoundation.org