

# What Is Mouth Cancer?

This is the general term given to the variety of malignant tumours that develop in the mouth, (oral cavity). The Mouth Cancer Foundation promotes awareness of all head and neck cancers i.e. throat (pharynx), voice box (larynx), salivary glands, nose, paranasal, sinuses, lips and skin.

# Facts About Mouth Cancer

1 person every <b>3 hours</b> is lost to Mouth cancer	Over <b>8300</b> new cases in the UK each year
Each year <b>2700+</b> lives are lost to Mouth Cancer	Worldwide Mouth Cancer affects <b>650,000</b> per year
Mouth Cancer is <b>twice</b> as common in men than in women	<b>78% off</b> cases occur in the <b>Over 55</b> age group

**Detected early there is an excellent chance of complete cure!**

## Symptoms

- ✓ 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 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.

## Risk Factors

- ✓ Tobacco use is the main cause of mouth cancer.
- ✓ Drinking alcohol to excess can increase risks four fold.
- ✓ Drinkers **and** smokers are 30 times more likely to develop mouth cancer.
- ✓ Poor diet and social deprivation is linked to a third of all cancer cases.
- ✓ The Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), transmitted through oral sex, could overtake tobacco and alcohol as the main risk factor within the next decade.
- ✓ Exposure to the sun is a cause of skin cancer which can affect the lips and face.

To make a donation or for FREE information visit [www.mouthcancerfoundation.org](http://www.mouthcancerfoundation.org)

Advice Line: 01924 950 950 • Head Office +44 (0) 208 940 5680  
Alternatively you can email [info@mouthcancerfoundation.org](mailto:info@mouthcancerfoundation.org)



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MOUTH CANCER

# Self Check



Are you checking for **Mouth Cancer** once a month?



Mouth Cancer FOUNDATION

Awareness and Support

[www.mouthcancerfoundation.org](http://www.mouthcancerfoundation.org)

The Mouth Cancer Foundation is a registered charity (No. 1109298) dedicated to saving and improving the lives of everyone affected by head and neck cancers. Support can play a pivotal role in meeting the psychological needs of patients. The charity offers free information and resources to patients, carers, survivors and professionals.

# The **2** minute do it yourself self-examination that could save your life!

Examine yourself once a month using our 2 minute self check guide below! All you need is a **mirror**, a good **light source** and **clean fingers**!



Follow the step by step guide. At each step you are looking for anything unusual especially any lumps, red or white patches, changes in colour/texture or lingering ulcers. If you are worried ask a friend to check!

## 01 Face

**Look at the whole face** - are there any swellings you haven't noticed before? **Inspect your skin** - has anything changed recently? Have moles become larger or started to itch or bleed. **Turn your head from side to side** - this stretches the skin over the muscles making lumps easier to see.

## 03 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.



## 04 Gums

Use your thumb and forefinger. Examine your gums feeling around the gum for anything unusual.

## 06 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.



## 02 Neck

Run your 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?



## 05 Cheeks

**Open your mouth and pull your cheeks away, one side at a time, with your finger.** Look for any red or white patches. Does everything feel the same on both sides? **Use your finger in the cheek to check for ulcers, lumps or tenderness. Repeat on the other side.** Your tongue can be helpful to locate sore areas, ulcers or rough patches.

## 07 Floor and 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. **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.

