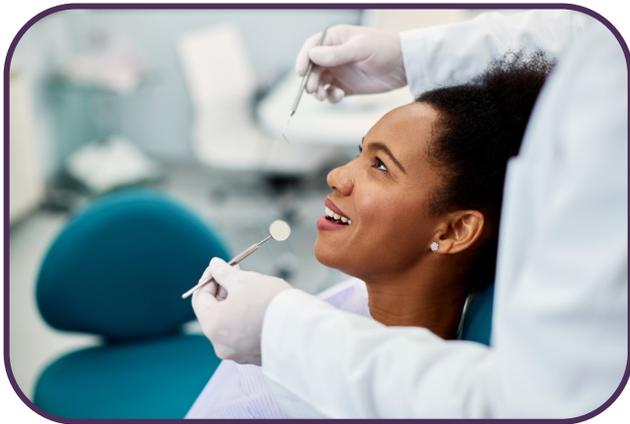
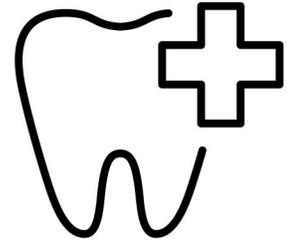


# Oral Cancer

## What is oral cancer?

- Cancer is when cells in the body begin to grow out of control.
- Oral cancer is found in the mouth and throat, and can affect breathing, talking, eating, chewing, swallowing, and digesting food.

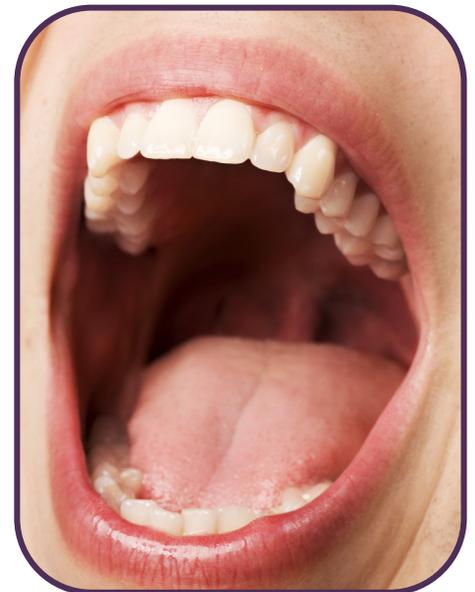


## What is oral pre-cancer?

Oral pre-cancer is a tissue change in the mouth that may become cancer. It can appear as white, gray, or red areas in the mouth. This condition should be evaluated by your dentist or medical provider to determine its importance.

## Risk factors for oral cancers:

- Commercial tobacco use (smoking tobacco, smokeless tobacco, and possibly vaping)
- Alcohol use
- Human papillomavirus (HPV) infection
- Excess body weight
- Sun exposure or ultraviolet light
- Poor nutrition



## Symptoms of oral cancers:

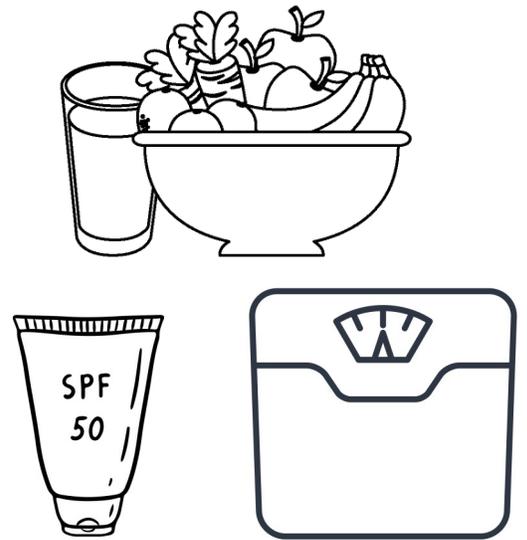
- Red or white patches in mouth
- Sore throat or feeling like something is caught in your throat
- Lumps or irritation in lip, mouth, or throat
- Difficulty chewing, swallowing, or speaking
- Difficulty moving jaw or tongue
- Swelling of jaw
- Numbness of tongue or other areas of the mouth
- Ear pain

**If symptoms occur for two or more weeks, please see a dentist or medical provider.**

## How to prevent oral cancer:

- Avoid commercial tobacco use
- Limit alcohol use
- Maintain a healthy weight and diet
- Limit exposure to the sun or ultraviolet light
- Get vaccinated against HPV
- Visit the dentist regularly for oral cancer screenings

**Remember, many oral cancers are preventable.**



## Oral cancer in Wisconsin during 2012-2016:

Total estimated number of mouth and throat cancers due to HPV infection

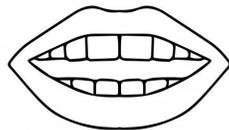
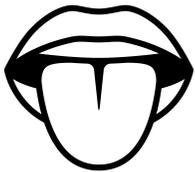
**1,251** new cancer cases<sup>1</sup>

**360** cancer deaths<sup>1</sup>

Total number of oral cancers (all causes)

**4,341** new cancer cases<sup>2</sup>

**878** cancer deaths<sup>2</sup>



For more information, please visit the Wisconsin Oral Health Program's website:

[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/oral-health](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/oral-health).

1. Wisconsin Cancer Collaborative. (2021). *HPV-Related Cancers and Vaccination Coverage in Wisconsin*. <https://wicancer.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/HPV-Related-Cancers-in-Wisconsin-Issue-Brief.pdf>
2. Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics, Wisconsin Cancer Reporting System. Query term "oral cavity and pharynx." Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH) data query system, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/index.htm>. Cancer Module, accessed 9/30/2022.



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