



➤ Preventive care & cancer awareness

October

Oral cancer: Find it early

The next time you see your dentist, ask about oral cancer screenings. What are these, exactly? They're non-surgical exams that help your dentist find abnormal cells in your mouth. By finding these cells early, you can better fight cancer.

If it's not found early, oral cancer can spread to other areas, and treating it can be devastating and costly. Unlike other cancers, the mortality rate of oral cancer has not gone down much in the past 30 years. This is mostly because it's usually found late. However, when oral cancer is caught early, five-year survival rates improve from 54 to 81 percent.

You could be at risk for oral cancer if you:

- Use tobacco
- Drink alcohol excessively
- Get too much sun
- Are a man older than 40
- Have a family history of oral cancer

Folic acid boosts breast cancer survival

Three cheers for folic acid! Research shows that foods rich in it can help women survive breast cancer. Women who get more dietary folate were 22 percent less likely to die from breast cancer five years after being diagnosed with it, compared with those who got less folate.

Lots of great foods are rich in folic acid. Try spinach, asparagus, lentils, garbanzo beans, orange juice and lima beans.

Source: Breast Cancer Research and Treatment

Stop smoking and get better right away

It's never too late to quit smoking or chewing tobacco. The sooner you quit, the more you lower your chances of getting cancer and other diseases. Within minutes of smoking your last cigarette, your body begins to heal itself. And the longer you stay away, the healthier you get.

Consider this. After you stop smoking for...

- 20 minutes, your heart rate and blood pressure drop.
- 12 hours, the carbon monoxide in your blood goes back to normal.
- One to nine months, you'll cough less and breathe more deeply; the tiny, hair-like structures that move mucus out of your lungs (called cilia) start working normally. This helps clean your lungs and lowers your risk for infections.
- One year, your extra risk for coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.
- Five years, your risk of cancer in the mouth, throat, esophagus and bladder are cut in half. If you're a woman, your cervical cancer risk falls to that of a non-smoker. After two to five years, your stroke risk can fall to that of a non-smoker.
- 10 years, your risk of dying from lung cancer is about half that of a smoker's. Your risk of cancer of the larynx (voice box) and pancreas also decreases.

Source: American Cancer Society

Health plans in Alaska provided by Moda Health Plan, Inc. Dental plans in Alaska provided by Delta Dental of Alaska. 7418571 (9/14)
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