



## ➤ Preventive care & cancer awareness

October

### Early detection of oral cancer is key to survival

Next time you visit the dentist for your regular checkup, take note of whether he or she performs an oral cancer screening. Oral cancer screenings are non-surgical screenings designed to aid in the early detection of abnormal cells in the mouth.

When oral cancer is not detected and treated in its early stages, the morbidity rate is high and treatment can be devastating and costly. Unlike other cancers, the mortality rate of oral cancer has not decreased significantly in the past 30 years, primarily because of late detection.

When oral cancer is caught early, five-year survival rates improve from 54 percent to 81 percent. You could be at risk for oral cancer if you:

- Use tobacco
- Drink alcohol excessively
- Overexpose yourself to the sun
- Are a male over age 40
- Have a family history of oral cancer

### The benefits of quitting tobacco are immediate

It is never too late to quit using tobacco. The sooner smokers quit, the more they can reduce their chances of getting cancer and other diseases. Within minutes of smoking the last cigarette, the body begins to restore itself.

And the longer you abstain, the more dramatic the health improvements are. Consider the following timeline:

**20 minutes after quitting**, your heart rate and blood pressure drop.

**12 hours after quitting**, the carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.

**One to nine months after quitting**, coughing and shortness of breath decrease; cilia (tiny hair-like structures that move mucus out of the lungs) start to regain normal function in the lungs, increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs and reduce the risk of infection.

**One year after quitting**, the excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a continuing smoker's.

**Five years after quitting**, risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus and bladder are cut in half. Cervical cancer risk falls to that of a non-smoker. Stroke risk can fall to that of a non-smoker after two to five years.

**10 years after quitting**, the risk of dying from lung cancer is about half that of a person who is still smoking. The risk of cancer of the larynx (voice box) and pancreas decreases.

*Source: American Cancer Society*

### Research finds foods rich in folic acid fight breast cancer

According to research, folic acid-rich foods can help reduce the risk of death from breast cancer, and women with a higher intake of dietary "folate" were 22 percent less likely to die from breast cancer five years post-diagnosis than those whose folate intake was lower.

The various folic acid-rich foods cited include spinach, asparagus, lentils, garbanzo beans, orange juice and lima beans.

*Source: Breast Cancer Research and Treatment*

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