

## Useful Contacts

If you have any concerns please ring your dental practice asap for advice / treatment.

If you are unable to get an appointment (i.e. on weekends or bank holidays), or you don't have a dentist, you can call the NHS helpline on: 111 to make an emergency dental appointment.

For help with stopping smoking contact the Leeds Stop Smoking Service on: 0800 169 4219 or visit the website: [www.oneyouleeds.co.uk](http://www.oneyouleeds.co.uk)

For help with alcohol concerns contact Drinkline on: 0300 123 1110 or visit their website: [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

Further Information can be found at:

- [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- [www.dentalhealth.org](http://www.dentalhealth.org)
- [www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)

## Help us get it right

If you have a complaint, concern, comment or compliment, please let us know by speaking to a member of staff. We learn from your feedback and use the information you provide to improve and develop our service.

## Leeds Community Dental Service

Admin Office

St George's Centre

St George's Road

Leeds LS10 4UZ

Tel: 0113 392 9875

Opening hours: 8.30am to 12.30pm then 1.15pm to 4.45pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays)

If you would like to talk to someone outside the service contact the **Patient Experience Team** on **0113 220 8585**, Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm or email [Ich.pet@nhs.net](mailto:Ich.pet@nhs.net)

**We can make this information available in Braille, large print, audio or other languages on request.**



**Leeds Community  
Healthcare**  
NHS Trust

# Community Dental Service

## Mouth Cancer Awareness



**Information for patients on the causes, symptoms and how to reduce the risk of getting mouth cancer**

## What is mouth cancer?

Cancer can strike any part of the body, mouth cancer refers to cancer that develops in any part that makes up the mouth. This includes the lips, tongue, gums, cheeks, roof of mouth, tonsils and salivary glands. Statistics show that only one in four adults know of the possible symptoms of mouth cancer but early detection is crucial for survival. If caught early enough there is a nine out of ten chance of survival, therefore it is extremely important that you know what to look out for.

### Common symptoms include:

- Mouth ulcers or sores which do not heal within 3 weeks
- Unusual lumps or swellings in the cheeks, roof of the mouth, tongue, lips, jaw, head or neck area that don't go away
- Long lasting red, white or dark patches in the mouth

### Other symptoms include:

- Pain or difficulty when chewing, swallowing or moving your jaw
- Persistent chronic sore throat, speech problems or hoarse voice
- Numbness or bleeding in any area of the mouth or lips

Sadly, far too many mouth cancers are not spotted early enough. It's strongly recommended that you visit your GP or dentist if any of the above symptoms have lasted longer than 3 weeks.

## What causes mouth cancer?

The leading causes of mouth cancer in the UK are:

- Smoking (tobacco) including cigarettes, pipes and cigars
- Chewing tobacco, snuff or other tobacco products
- Heavy alcohol consumption

Other causes include:

- Chewing betel nuts (with or without tobacco)
- Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) (transmitted via oral sex)
- Poor diet (lack of vegetables and fruit)
- Poor oral health / hygiene
- Over-exposure to sunlight (may cause lip cancer)

## What key findings show

- In 2017 there were 8,302 new cases of mouth cancer diagnosed in the UK
- 2,722 Brits lost their life to mouth cancer in 2017
- Mouth cancer cases have increased by 49% in the last 10 years
- 56% of mouth cancers appear on the tongue and tonsils
- 78% of mouth cancers are diagnosed in the over 55's
- Survival depends on where the cancer strikes and how early it is diagnosed. The earlier it is caught the easier it tends to be to tackle

## How can I reduce my risk of getting mouth cancer?

Better lifestyle choices can help lower the risk such as:

- Stopping smoking or chewing tobacco, betel nuts etc.
- Cutting down on alcohol (drink only within recommended limits - no more than 2-3 units a day for women, no more than 3-4 units a day for men)
- Eating a diet rich in vegetables and fruit
- Keeping your mouth and teeth healthy
- Using sunscreen on face and lips when exposed to the sun, even in the winter.

## What else can I do?

- Make sure you regularly visit the dentist for an examination (every year, or as often as they recommend, even if you have no teeth)
- Go and see your dentist or GP immediately if you notice anything out of the ordinary, especially if you have any of the symptoms listed opposite.

If your dentist or GP finds anything abnormal, they will refer you to the hospital for further examination and treatment if necessary.

**Remember—'IF IN DOUBT, GET CHECKED OUT'**