



AUSTRALIAN DENTAL  
ASSOCIATION INC.

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## **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF ORAL CANCERS?**

Early detection of oral cancers can help save lives, so it's important to know what you should be looking out for. Taking a look inside your mouth on a regular basis can assist in early detection of any unusual sores or lesions.

Checking for signs of oral cancer is also a part of your dentist's regular check-up procedure. A dentist is able to assess your mouth thoroughly for abnormalities, so it's vital to visit your dentist regularly.

You can also look for the signs yourself in-between visits, by checking your lips, gums, tongue, cheek and inside of your mouth for irregularities.

Signs and symptoms to be aware of include:

- Red or white patches in your mouth
- An ulcer or sore that does not heal and/or bleeds easily
- A blood blister that does not heal
- A thick or hard spot or lump that may or may not be painful
- A roughened or crusted area or sore
- Numbness anywhere in your mouth
- Pain and tenderness
- Changes in the way your teeth bite together
- Pain when chewing or swallowing
- Difficulty when swallowing or moving your jaw
- Difficulty moving your tongue
- Changes in your speech such as slurring or lack of clarity
- Loose teeth and/or sore gums
- Altered taste
- Swollen lymph glands

Looking after your teeth helps keep your mouth in optimum condition. Ways to maintain good oral health include:

- Brush your teeth twice a day
- Floss your teeth once a day
- Consume a healthy diet rich in vegetables and lean protein. Reduce your intake of sugary foods and beverages
- Drink plenty of fluoridated tap water
- Drink no more than two standard alcoholic drinks per day
- Don't smoke
- Check your mouth regularly for any unusual sores and lesions

- Have regular dental check-ups where your dentist will look at the health of both your teeth and your mouth

Most importantly, do not delay seeking immediate advice from a dentist or medical professional if you notice any unusual symptoms or sores on your lips or in your mouth.

Visit [www.dentalhealthweek.com.au](http://www.dentalhealthweek.com.au) for more information on oral cancers and how to look after your mouth.