

S  CS

## SELF ORAL CANCER SCREENING

LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT  
ORAL CANCER IS, ITS  
CAUSES AND WHAT IT  
MAY LOOK LIKE

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## WHAT IS ORAL CANCER?

According to the American Cancer Society, approximately 48,000 Americans develop oral cancer every year and 8500 people die of the disease annually. If oral cancer is detected in its earliest stage the survival rate is much greater. The most common type of cancer that develops in the mouth is called squamous cell carcinoma (SCC). By performing a monthly Self Oral Cancer Screening (SOCS) you may be able to identify an early change in your mouth!

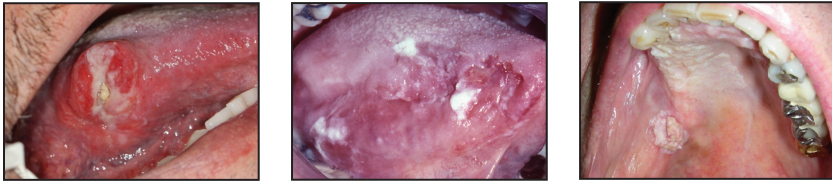
## WHAT CAN ORAL PRE-CANCERS AND CANCERS LOOK LIKE?

- White spots with sharply defined borders from the normal tissue
- Red spots with sharply defined borders from the normal tissue
- Ulcers (open sores) that do not heal in 2 weeks
- Lumps and bumps growing out of the tissue

### PRE-CANCERS:



### CANCERS:



## LOCATIONS WHERE MOST ORAL CANCERS DEVELOP:

1. Sides and under surface of tongue
2. Floor of mouth (part of the mouth under your tongue where the tongue rests)
3. Soft palate and back of throat

## WHAT CAUSES ORAL PRE-CANCER AND CANCER?

- Smoking tobacco, smokeless tobacco and heavy alcohol consumption
- Smoking tobacco and drinking alcoholic beverages at the same time increases the risk of cancer.
- Certain types of the human papillomavirus (HPV), particularly type 16, have been shown to cause cancers more commonly in the oropharynx (soft palate, back of throat, back of tongue).
- However, oral cancers can develop in people with no known risk factors.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT ORAL PRE-CANCER AND CANCER?

- STOP smoking. STOP using smokeless tobacco. STOP heavy alcohol consumption.
- Do not smoke tobacco products and drink alcohol together.
- Vaccinate to prevent human papillomavirus infection (helps prevent oropharyngeal cancers).

## SELF ORAL CANCER SCREENING (SOCS)

- Performing a SOCS once a month could save your life!
- Examining your own mouth will help you identify any signs of oral pre-cancer or cancer.
- Make sure to wash your hands, have a small flashlight handy, and remove any dentures or appliances so you can see all tissues in the mirror.

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Examine the external surface of your lips, pull your lips out and examine all inside surfaces and your gums.



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Look at the inside of both of your cheeks with your flashlight, then feel those areas with your fingers.



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Look at the floor of your mouth (beneath your tongue) with your flashlight. Feel the floor of your mouth with your finger.



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Stick out your tongue, examine the top, both sides, and under surface using your flashlight. Feel all of these areas with your fingers.



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Look at your soft palate and back of your throat with your flashlight. (Do not stick your tongue out when you do this, it will get in the way of seeing the back of your throat.)



**IF YOU FIND SOMETHING,  
SEE A DENTIST OR DENTAL  
SPECIALIST FOR AN  
EVALUATION!**



The logo for LSU Health New Orleans, featuring the text "LSU Health" in a bold, sans-serif font. "LSU" is in blue and "Health" is in yellow. Below this, "NEW ORLEANS" is written in a smaller, blue, all-caps font. A thin blue horizontal line is positioned between "Health" and "NEW ORLEANS".

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**[www.lsusd.lsuhschool.edu/SOCS](http://www.lsusd.lsuhschool.edu/SOCS)**

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