

7-Step DIY Oral Cancer Screening

(NC) It's important to be vigilant when it comes to oral cancers, especially since they're on the rise. Along with scheduling routine visits to see your oral healthcare provider, it's important to perform a regular self-exam and be aware of changes in your mouth.

Lisa Taylor, Registrar and CEO of the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, says there are seven simple things that every adult should know how to do — seven steps that could save your life.



1. Tongue. In front of a mirror and in a well-lit room, stick out your tongue and hold the end of it with a cloth to give you some grip. Move your tongue to the right and then the left and look for any red and white patches, doing the same for the top and bottom of the tongue. Use your index finger to feel for any unusual lumps on the sides, top and bottom of it.

2. Lip and cheek. Look around the edge of your lips for any lesions or sores. Using the thumb and index finger of both hands, pull back your upper and lower lips and look for red or white lesions/sores. Using these same fingers, feel for any lumps or bumps. Next, use your thumb and index finger to pull back the right side of your cheek looking for any red or white

patches. Using these same fingers, rub your cheek between them to feel for any lumps or bumps. Repeat on the left side.

3. Floor of mouth. Raise tongue to the roof of your mouth and look under where it rests on the bottom of your mouth for any white and red patches. Using one finger inside the floor of the mouth and another on the opposing surface from the outside (under your chin) feel for any lumps/bumps between your fingers.

4. Roof of mouth. Look at the roof of your mouth for any unusual sores or red and white patches. Rub the roof of your mouth and feel for new or unusual swelling.

5. Head and neck. Using all four fingers to rub in a circular motion, feel your neck for unusual lumps/bumps or tender areas. Repeat this on the back of your neck along your hairline and behind, under and in front of your ears.

6. Say “ahhhh...” Press down on your tongue with a tongue depressor or teaspoon; say “ahhh” and examine the back of your throat looking for red/white patches or unusual bumps.

7. Tell someone. Call your oral health professional and have any unusual findings checked — early detection is key.



Find more information at www.cdho.org.



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