



ORAL CANCER - 2023 Issue

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Cancer is known as the abnormal uncontrollable growth of cells in the human body. Oral cancer is specifically cancers located in the oral cavity and the throat. Oral cancer can be located under the tongue, on the tongue, the lips, the gum, or soft tissue lining on the cheeks and on the throat.

The General Causes of Cancer are:

- Tobacco use like cigarettes, chewing tobacco, snuff, and other smokeless tobacco products.
- Alcohol use especially long term and excessive use.
- Sexually transmitted diseases (Human Papilloma Virus – HPV). There has been a link made between HPV and oral cancers.
- Sun exposure.
- Diet.
- Genetics, individuals with family history of cancer are most likely to also have cancer.
- Previous cancer diagnosis (possibility of recurrence).
- Common in men and individuals over 45 years.
- Weak immune system.

Cancer is categorised into two areas, benign cancer and malignant cancer.

Benign cancer – This is cancer that is less of a life-threatening condition. These types of cancers are mostly painless and do not rapidly spread. They have clearly defined borders and don't invade the surrounding structures. The common types of benign oral cancers:

- Oral Leukoplakia – Presents as a white patch on the lining of the oral cavity. This lesion can further develop into a malignant tumor.
- Oral Lichen Planus – Also presents as a white patch and ulcers in the oral cavity.
- Fibroma – These appear white or red and have hardened yet smooth scarring appearance.
- Papilloma – Small growths in the mouth caused by human papilloma virus (HPV).

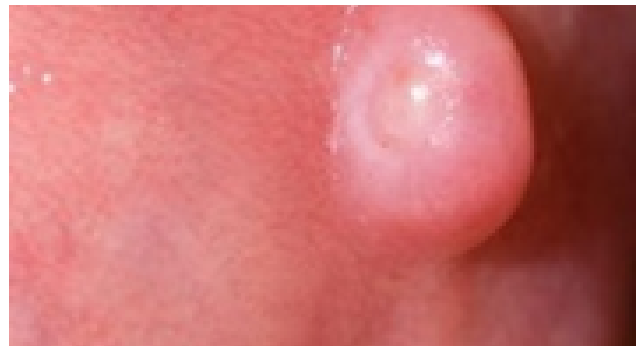


Treatment Plans for Benign Oral Lesions Include:

- Observation of the lesion to identify any changes and effect on patient.
- Laser therapy to remove the lesion.
- As a last option, surgical removal of the lesion.

Malignant Cancer – These cancer tumors are more aggressive in the way they grow. The borders are poorly defined and invades structures around it. Common types of malignant oral cancers are:

- Squamous Cell Carcinoma – Commonly found under the tongue but can also be found on the lips, tongue, or gums.
- All other malignant cancers are named based on their location e.g., oral tongue cancer, oral floor cancer, palate cancer, lip cancer, and gum cancer.



Treatment Plan for Malignant Cancers:

1. Surgical removal of the cancerous lesion depending on the size and how far the lesion has spread.
2. Chemotherapy is the use of medication to stop progression of the lesion and completely destroy cancer cells.
3. Targeted therapy is using specific medication that target specific cancer cells.
4. Radiation therapy uses the transfer of high energy rays to target cancer cells in a specific area.
5. Reconstruction surgery for the reconstruction of the affected tissues to restore functionality and appearance for the patient.
6. Speech therapy to help oral cancer patients restore speech post treatment.
7. Combination therapy is the use of medication, radiation, and surgical intervention to treat cancer.