

### Treatment of mouth cancer

Treatment options vary and depend on how early the cancer is diagnosed or detected. Removal of the tumour, followed by radiotherapy may be suitable for small tumours, chemotherapy is required in more advanced cases.

### How can Cancer Focus NI help?

- Cancer Focus provides information and support to people worried about, or affected by cancer.
- You can phone us free on our helpline on 0800 783 3339 (Monday – Friday 9am – 1pm) if you:
  - Are worried about any of the symptoms listed in this leaflet
  - Would like to talk to someone for emotional support for yourself or your family
  - Would like to know more about the range of both support services and cancer prevention activities available from the charity



If you would like help to stop smoking go to [www.want2stop.info](http://www.want2stop.info)



If you have any concerns about cancer you can talk to one of our specialist nurses on the Cancer Focus NI free information and support NurseLine

**0800 783 3339**

Monday to Friday 9am - 1pm  
Calls are free from a landline  
[nurseline@cancerfocusni.org](mailto:nurseline@cancerfocusni.org)



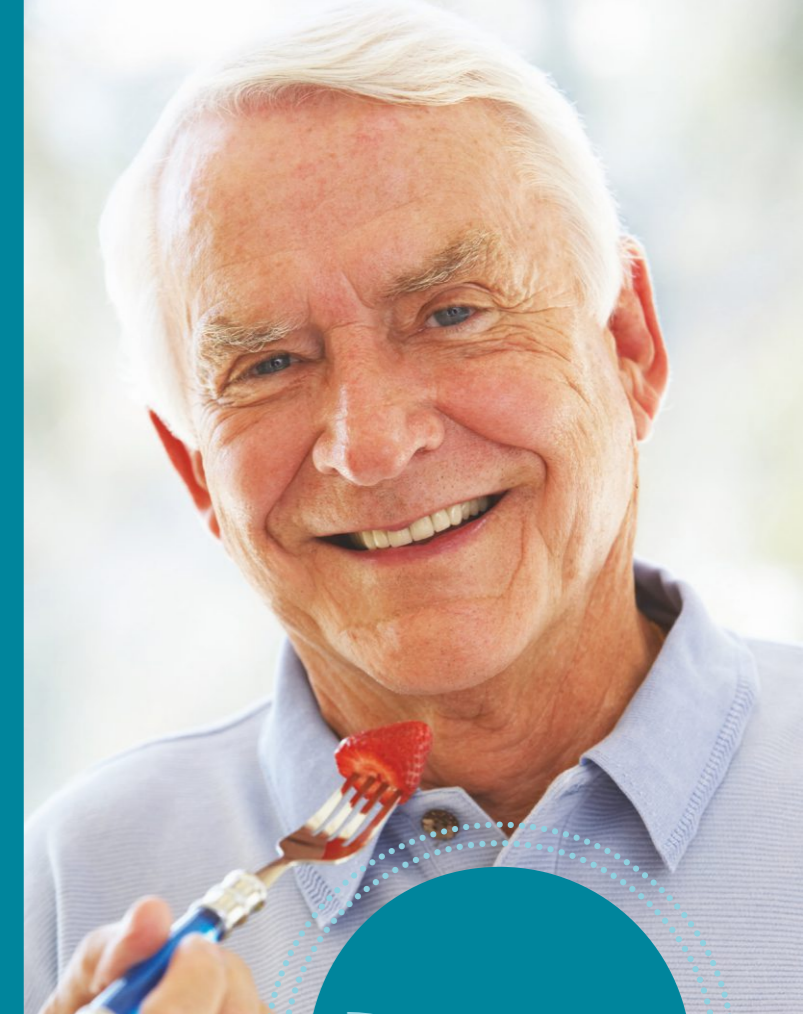
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**Focus on  
Mouth Cancer**

Mouth cancer is also known as oral cancer and is a general term for cancer of the mouth, including the lip, gums, throat and tongue with the lining of the mouth being the most common site for the cancer. Around 200 people are diagnosed in Northern Ireland each year.

It is more common in men than women and is rare in people under the age of 40. However, mouth cancer is changing. The gap between men and women is narrowing and it is increasing in younger patients. If mouth cancer is spotted early the chances of a complete cure are good. When cancerous lesions are small, treatment is generally less complicated and more effective. A cure is less likely if the cancer has spread.

### Symptoms of mouth cancer

The most common signs of mouth cancer are:

- An ulcer on the lip, tongue or in the mouth that doesn't heal within three weeks
- Pain in the mouth or earache that persists
- A white or red patch in the mouth that doesn't go away
- A lump or thickening in the mouth, throat or on the lip
- Difficulty or pain with chewing, swallowing or speaking
- Bleeding or numbness in the mouth
- A lump in the neck
- Loose teeth for no obvious reason
- Weight loss over a short space of time

### Diagnosis of mouth cancer

The symptoms outlined in this leaflet are often caused by something less serious and don't usually mean it's cancer. However, finding cancer early makes it more treatable and a trip to your dentist or doctor could save your life. So if in doubt get checked out.

If it's not serious, your mind will be put at rest. You certainly won't be wasting anyone's time. Have yearly examinations by a dentist, even if you no longer have your own teeth.

**Dentists are trained to spot early signs of mouth and salivary gland cancer and can easily see parts of your mouth that you cannot see.**



Are you at risk from Mouth Cancer?  
Circle your answers then check below.

Do you visit the dentist?

- A Often  B Sometimes  C Never

Do you drink alcohol?

- A Never  B Sometimes  C Often

Do you use sunscreen regularly on your lips?

- A Often  B Sometimes  C Never

Do you smoke?

- A Never  B Sometimes  C Often

Do you eat five portions of fruit and vegetables daily?

- A Often  B Sometimes  C Never

**All As** Your risk is low

**All Bs** Your risk is moderate

**All Cs** Your risk is higher

These lifestyle factors increase the risk of mouth cancer:

- Smoking or chewing tobacco
- Regularly drinking large amounts of alcohol, especially spirits. People who use both alcohol and tobacco have a much greater risk
- Over-exposure to sunshine or use of sunbeds is a known risk for cancer of the lip
- Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)



To reduce your risk:

- Check for changes in your mouth and have regular dental check ups
- Get help to stop smoking
- If you drink alcohol of any type, limit your intake. Not drinking alcohol is better for cancer prevention.
- Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables daily
- Apply a sunscreen with at least (SPF) factor 15 and 4 stars regularly on the lips if outdoors
- Don't use sunbeds
- Take regular exercise – at least 30 minutes daily
- Reduce HPV risk by practising safer sex and limiting your number of partners