

What happens if an area of abnormal tissue was observed?

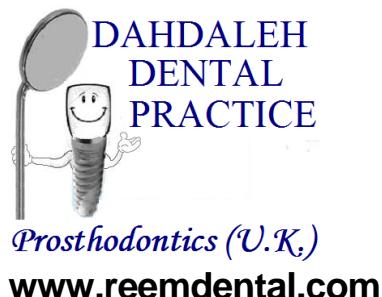
If an area of abnormal tissue is discovered at the time of your dental examination, your dentist will let you know and a biopsy (a tissue sample) would be recommended.

This procedure is done simply under local anaesthetic. The tissue sample will be investigated under the microscope to confirm the diagnosis.

Early detection and prevention can save lives.

If in doubt... get it checked out!

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Mouth Cancer Action Month (1-31 November 2014)

The British Dental Health Foundation started Mouth Cancer Action Month as a charity campaign which aims to raise awareness of mouth cancer and make a difference by saving thousands of lives through early detection and prevention.

Mouth cancer kills 1 person every 5 hours.

The disease has grown by a third in the last decade – and remains one of very few cancers which are predicted to increase further in the coming years making this campaign important.

Top 8 symptoms of oral cancer

1. An ulcer or white or red patch anywhere in the mouth that does not heal within 3 weeks
2. A lump or swelling anywhere in the mouth, jaw or neck that persists for more than 3 weeks

- 3. A difficulty in swallowing, chewing or moving the tongue or jaw
- 4. A swelling of the jaw that causes dentures to fit poorly or become uncomfortable
- 5. Numbness of the tongue or other area of the mouth
- 6. A feeling that something is caught in the throat
- 7. A chronic sore throat or hoarseness that persists more than 6 weeks
- 8. An unexplained loosening of teeth with no obvious dental cause

What is mouth cancer linked to?

- Most cases of mouth cancer are linked to tobacco (cigarette, cigar, pipe smoking, hukka, tobacco chewing like betel quid, gutka, qat and paan)
- Alcohol consumption.

- If tobacco and alcohol are consumed together the risk is even greater.
- Over exposure to sunlight can also increase the risk of cancer of the lips.
- Most recent reports have linked mouth cancer to the human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is the major cause of cervical cancer and can spread through oral sex.

How can you reduce the risk?

1. Not smoking or chewing tobacco
2. Having a healthier diet; low in fat and rich in vegetables and fruits
3. If you drink alcohol, reduce alcohol consumption. The current guidelines state that men should not exceed 21 units per week and females should not exceed 14 units per week. A unit of alcohol is a small glass of wine, half a pint of beer (~250ml) or a shot of spirit such as vodka or whiskey.
4. Practicing safe sex and limiting the number of partners you have may help reduce your chances of contracting HPV. HPV vaccines are available for women and men from ages 16-26.

5. Applying sun screen or products containing protection against UV light.
6. Regular dental check-ups are important for detection of early tissue changes.

How can oral cancer present?

Oral cancer can affect all the soft tissue in the mouth including lips, the tongue, inside the cheeks, gums, the floor of the mouth, the palate as well as the tonsils and the throat.

