



April is Oral Cancer Awareness Month

The subject of oral cancer sounds scary, but it's important to learn about the disease and spread awareness so you can prevent it.

Oral cancer refers to cancer that occurs anywhere in the mouth. It could be on the tongue, the lips, the gums, the tongue, inside the cheek, or in the roof or floor of the mouth. Thousands die from oral cancer every year. It's a truly deadly disease.

The reason for a higher death rate of oral cancer is because it often goes undetected until it has become too advanced and spread to another part of the body.

While there is no clear answer about what causes this disease, some potential causes are known. Awareness of these causes can help to prevent this illness.

- **Age:** Most patients, who develop oral cancer, are more than 40 years old. If you're over 40 years, ensure your dentist checks for any signs of oral cancer. Maintain a healthy dental hygiene regimen and go for regular dental checkups.
- **Tobacco:** Excessive tobacco use, whether it is cigarette smoking or tobacco chewing, can contribute to oral cancer. The best way to prevent oral cancer is to avoid tobacco altogether.
- **Alcohol:** Just like tobacco, excessive alcohol consumption can put you at high risk for oral cancer. Alcohol converts into a chemical called acetaldehyde, which damages the body's DNA and blocks cells from repairing any damage. Combined with tobacco, the dehydrating effects of alcohol make it even easier for tobacco to invade mouth tissue, causing cancer.
- **Sun exposure:** Did you know your lips need sun protection, just like the rest of your skin? Excessive sun exposure may increase your risk of developing cancer on your lips, especially the lower lip.
- **Diet:** A lack of all the nutrients you need, for example, from vegetables and fruits, can weaken your immune system and make you more vulnerable to the disease.

Fortunately, many of these causes are about lifestyle choices, which you can control.

Awareness, avoiding excess of substances, such as tobacco, making small changes to your lifestyle can help you avoid this deadly disease.

If you're concerned whether you are at risk for oral cancer, it is best to consult your dentist.

S/he can perform an oral exam and look for any telltale signs or review your medical history

and overall health and alert you to risk factors. Regular dental exams can be your first line of defense against oral cancer!

To learn more about treatment for chipped or missing teeth, cavities or teeth cleaning, consult the leading Topeka Kansas dentist, call [Covenant Family Dental Care](#) at **785-268-6282** Today. The Covenant Family Dental Care team is committed to providing you a relaxing and positive dental health and care experience.