

ORAL CANCER PREVENTION

CAN START AT THE DENTIST

HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS (HPV) AND OROPHARYNGEAL CANCER



Cancers of the oropharynx (back of throat, including tongue and tonsils) are linked to HPV



Approximately 5,500 new cases of HPV-related oropharyngeal cancer in women annually in US



Approximately 16,200 new cases of HPV-related oropharyngeal cancer in men annually in US



Risk of HPV-related oropharyngeal cancer is trending upward



WHAT IS HPV?

- There are over 200 different strains of the Human papillomavirus.
- Human papillomavirus is very common. Almost all men and women will encounter HPV at some point in their lives. In most cases, the body will "clear" the virus on its own within two years.
- One strain of HPV can cause genital warts which is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the U.S.
- HPVs are associated with at least 6 different human cancers.
- The **HPV vaccine** can give protection from all six of these known oncogenic strains provided it is given prior to being exposed.
- Other strains of HPV can infect the mouth and throat and are being linked to oral cancers.

HOW DO PEOPLE GET ORAL HPV?

- Evidence suggests that oral HPV is transmitted via mucous to mucous contact often associated with oral sex and possibly deep kissing.
- Using condoms and dental rubber dams during oral sex may help decrease your chance of getting or passing HPV by providing a physical barrier from mucous to mucous contact.

WHAT IS HPV OROPHARYNGEAL CANCER?

- HPV16 and HPV18 are viruses that are closely associated with cancer of the oropharynx.
- The oropharynx consists of the back of the throat, the base of the tongue, tonsils, larynx and pharynx.
- Alcohol and tobacco usage may also contribute to your risk of oral cancer.



WHAT ARE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF OROPHARYNGEAL CANCER?



Persistent lesions on the base of the tongue or back of your mouth



Persistent sore throat and/or difficulty swallowing



Enlarged cervical lymph nodes



Sudden unexplained weight loss

*Some people may experience no signs or symptoms.

WHAT CAN I DO TO LOWER MY RISK OF GETTING OROPHARYNGEAL CANCER?



- Do not consume, or at least limit, alcohol or tobacco products.
- Educate yourself on the two-dose HPV vaccine which is recommended for both males and females before age 13.
- When engaging in oral sex, use of a condom or dental rubber dam is recommended to prevent direct mucous to mucous contact.
- Limit the number of sexual partners you have.
- **Ask your dentist to perform annual oral/oropharyngeal cancer screenings on you.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
WWW.CDC.GOV/VACCINES/VPD-VAC/HPV