



Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey

Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey understands that my dentist can spot serious health risks like oral cancer.



Oral Cancer and Dental Care

When it comes to oral cancer, early detection is your best defense.

The death rate for oral cancer is higher than that of cervical cancer, Hodgkins disease, brain cancer, liver cancer, testicular cancer, kidney cancer and skin cancer. This year, 30,000 Americans will be diagnosed with oral cancer, and 8,000 will die from the disease – roughly one person every hour of every day. Of those 30,000 newly diagnosed individuals, only half will be alive in five years.

The death rate of oral cancer is so high because it is often diagnosed late in its development, usually when the cancer has already spread to another location, typically the lymph nodes of the neck. However, dentists are trained to recognize lesions and other signs that can be early indicators of oral cancer.

The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is the leading cause of oropharyngeal cancers, which are cancers of the very back part of the mouth and the top of the throat.

Early-stage oral cancer, which is defined as being less than four centimeters in size and without lymph node involvement, is controlled in more than 75 percent of cases.

You may prevent oral cancer by not smoking or chewing tobacco, limiting your intake of alcohol, and receiving the HPV vaccine at the appropriate time.

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Signs of oral cancer

- Mouth sores that bleed easily or do not heal
- Mouth pain
- Lumps, soreness or thickening in or around the mouth, cheek, throat or tongue
- A white or red patch anywhere inside the mouth that doesn't go away
- Problems chewing or swallowing food
- Swelling of the jaw
- Loosening of the teeth
- Voice changes
- Pain in the ears

Be sure to visit your dentist regularly ...
it could improve the quality of your life.

Sources: qualitydentistry.com;
The Oral Cancer Foundation