



## Mouth Cancer Awareness Day Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020

### Toolkit

### #MouthCancerDay

## What is Mouth Head and Neck Cancer?

Mouth Head and Neck Cancer (MHNC) refers to cancers found in tissues of the mouth, head and neck. There are currently over 700 cases of mouth, head and neck cancer diagnosed in Ireland each year<sup>1</sup>. It is most common among those aged 55 or older but the number of cases in younger people is increasing. While it used to be 6 times more common in men, the number of cases in women is increasing and the difference is now only 2 to 1. Case numbers are set to increase by 30% in the next 25 years. Ireland's 5-year survival rate for head and neck cancer is just 54% as over two-thirds of patients are diagnosed with late stage disease (Stage III and IV). Excellent outcomes can be achieved for patients presenting with early stage disease. Unfortunately, for those who are diagnosed at a late stage, the outcomes can be poor and affected individuals can be left with life altering changes to their appearance and their ability to speak, eat and swallow. This is why it is so important to make people aware of the risk factors and early signs of MHNC to reduce the burden of this disease for the Irish population.

## What is Mouth Cancer Awareness Day?

Mouth Cancer Awareness Day (MCAD) takes place on **Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September** and is an annual campaign run by the Mouth Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Ireland Group.

The aim of MCAD is to:

1. Promote public and professional awareness of Mouth Head & Neck Cancer.
2. Tell people how to reduce the risk of this disease.
3. Promote early detection to improve potential outcomes.
4. Encourage people to check their mouth.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ncri.ie/sites/ncri/files/pubs/CancerIncidenceProjections\\_NCRI\\_fullreport\\_09042019\\_final.pdf](https://www.ncri.ie/sites/ncri/files/pubs/CancerIncidenceProjections_NCRI_fullreport_09042019_final.pdf)

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## Key message:

### Early detection of mouth cancer improves treatment and outcomes:

**“If you have a sore, ulcer, lump in your mouth, a sore throat or neck lump for more than 3 weeks, ring your dentist or doctor to get it checked.”**

## Prevention:

1. Smoking, drinking alcohol and HPV infection all increase the risk of developing mouth cancer.
2. Protect your mouth and body by adopting good oral hygiene habits, eating a healthy diet, which is low in sugar and high in fruits and vegetables, quitting tobacco use and avoiding alcohol for cancer prevention.
3. The World Health Organisation (WHO) considers the HPV vaccine to be extremely safe. Get further information on the HPV vaccine from [www.hpv.ie](http://www.hpv.ie). Encourage all first year boys and girls in second level schools to get the HPV vaccination.

## Target Audience

This year we are specifically targeting people over the age of 55.

We are inviting all community and voluntary organisations who work with people over the age of 55 to promote awareness of Mouth cancer on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September.

## Call to Action:

1. Check your mouth before you brush your teeth.
2. If you have a sore, ulcer, lump in your mouth, a sore throat or neck lump for more than three weeks, get checked by a dentist or doctor within 7 days.
3. Visit your dentist regularly, at least once a year, even if you have no teeth and wear dentures. 9 out of 10 adults in Ireland are entitled to a FREE oral exam, please check your entitlements on [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)
4. If you care for someone, remind them of the signs and symptoms of mouth cancer and encourage them to check their mouth and to visit their dentist at least once a year even if you have no teeth and wear dentures.

## What we are doing:

1. Launch of new information website [www.mouthcancer.ie](http://www.mouthcancer.ie)
2. We are running a social media campaign to raise awareness of mouth head and neck cancer

## How you can take part:

Please share the following on your social media using **#MouthCancerDay**

- New Website [www.mouthcancer.ie](http://www.mouthcancer.ie) which provides information, videos and pictures of how to maintain good oral health, how to reduce the risk of mouth cancer and identify the signs of mouth cancer.
- Videos: [See Patients stories here](#)
- [Motion Graphic](#)
- Share the Infographic on your social media channels using the hashtag #MouthCancerDay
- Like the [Mouth Cancer Awareness Facebook page](#)
- Look out for media coverage online and engage.

## Resources:

- Information leaflet: ***'Mouth, Head and Neck Cancer – what you should know'***  
[Order Irish Cancer Society leaflets here:](#)
- [Download 'Watch Your Mouth Leaflet, and other resources here](#)

Thank you very much for your support.

