

Dental check-ups could save your life!

Fredericton, NB - April 19, 2011 - Oral cancer kills over 1,000 people in Canada annually, approximately one-third of those diagnosed with the disease each year. Early detection is the key to surviving oral cancer – and your dentist has the training and skills to identify pre-cancerous conditions or early signs of cancer. If caught early enough, oral cancer can be treated successfully.

“Oral cancer is an insidious disease,” said Dr. Larry Peacocke, President of the NB Dental Society. “Most people don’t know what to look for. It is painless in the beginning, and unless they visit a dentist regularly, it’s unlikely that oral cancer will be detected in time. No one knows exactly what causes it, but tobacco and alcohol use, diet, excessive exposure to the sun and some genetic factors may contribute to development of oral cancer.”

Dr. Peacocke recommends that people have regular checkups with their dentist. “See your dentist immediately if you have any sore that persists longer than two weeks; a swelling, growth or lump in or around the mouth and neck; white or red patches in the mouth on the lips; repeated bleeding from the mouth or throat; difficulty swallowing or persistent hoarseness. The dentist will feel for lumps and examine the soft tissues in your mouth. If oral cancer is suspected, a biopsy will be required to confirm the diagnosis.”

You can help to prevent oral cancer by not smoking or using other tobacco products, limiting alcohol use, eating a healthy diet with lots of fruit and vegetables and seeing your dentist at least every six months. Survival rates greatly increase the earlier oral cancer is discovered.

April is Oral Health Month and the New Brunswick Dental Society is participating with a public education campaign highlighting the message “Not everybody can see it. But your Dentist can.”

The New Brunswick Dental Society exists to promote professional growth, high ethical standards and quality care giving through communication, education and the regulation of dentistry in New Brunswick.