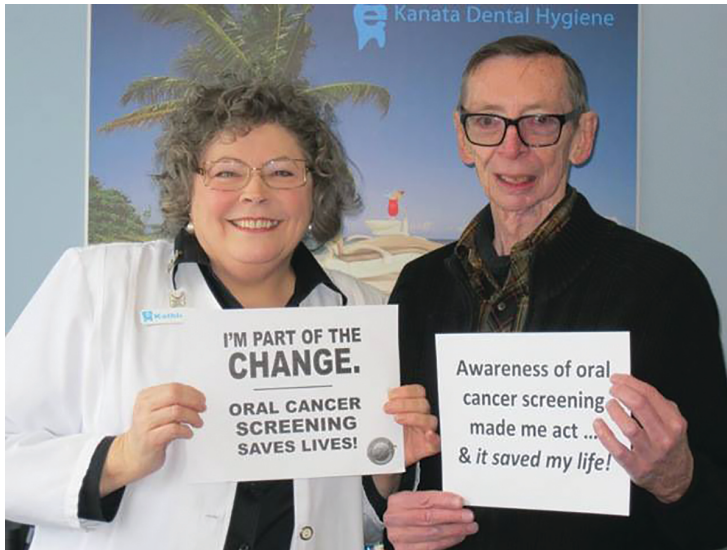


How to reduce the risk of oral cancer



Oral cancer is now the 13th most common type of cancer in Canada. Smoking, alcohol consumption, sun exposure to the lips, and HPV are all known risk factors, most of which are preventable. So by modifying our lifestyle choices, we can certainly reduce the risks.

Dental hygienists, who are trained to provide oral cancer screenings, tell us that we all have a role to play in reducing our risks and in improving treatment outcomes. They

remind us to watch for the following changes in our mouths in between regular dental visits:

- alterations to the colour or texture of gums, cheeks or tongue;
- persistent mouth sores that do not heal within 14 days;
- chronic sore throat;
- difficulty swallowing;
- lumps in the neck (even those that aren't bothersome);
- mouth or ear pain.

Most cancers of the mouth can be treated if caught in time. In order to reduce your risk, embrace a healthy lifestyle and maintain regular dental hygiene appointments that include oral cancer screenings.

More information on this topic is available online at www.dentalhygienecanada.ca.