



THE CANADIAN DENTAL  
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION  
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE  
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES



For immediate release (Disponible en français sur la demande)

## Media Release

### Oral cancer – not just your grandparent’s disease

February 1, 2013 (Ottawa, ON) — February 4 is [World Cancer Day](#) and the focus of this year’s campaign is to dispel damaging myths and misconceptions about cancer. Canada’s dental hygienists are in full support of dispelling myth number two –Cancer is a disease of the elderly.

Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide and accounted for 7.6 million deaths (around 13% of all deaths) in 2008. Oral Cancer is the 13<sup>th</sup> most common and fastest growing type of cancer, particularly for younger Canadians. There are 3 times as many cases of oral cancer as cervical cancer. Smoking, drinking, sun exposure of the lips and HPV are all risk factors in developing oral cancer.

“Most cancers of the mouth can be treated if caught in time, and oral cancers are frequently detected by dental hygienists who are familiar with the signs and symptoms.” says Canadian Association of Dental Hygienists (CDHA) president, Sandy Lawlor.

Here’s what the Canadian Association of Dental Hygienists (CDHA) advises you should watch for:

- Red or white patches in the mouth
- Lump or thickening of tissue in the mouth, neck or face
- Sores in the mouth that bleed or do not heal within 14 days
- Numbness in face or mouth
- Wart like masses inside the mouth
- Pain or difficulty swallowing, speaking, chewing or moving the jaw or tongue
- Hoarse throat that lasts for a long period of time

CDHA supports the continuing education of dental hygienists in the area of oral cancer by offering a comprehensive online course: Oral Cancer Awareness – 4 Life Saving Minutes, as well as several webinars on the subject.

At your next dental hygiene visit, request an oral cancer screening. “Reduce your risk;” Lawlor advises; “be tobacco free, use alcohol in moderation, eat a well-balanced diet, protect your skin from the sun, take steps to reduce your risk of contracting HPV. Maintain regular dental hygiene appointments to ensure early detection”.

Serving the profession since 1963, CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 24,000 registered dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing 16,500 individual members including dental hygienists and students. Dental hygiene is the 6th largest registered health profession in Canada with professionals working in a variety of settings, including independent practice, with people of all ages, addressing issues related to oral health. [Read more on oral cancer from CDHA.](#)

– 30 –

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