Prevalence
• An estimated 35,000 new cases of oral cancer will be diagnosed each year.
• Oral cancer will claim 7,600 lives annually.
• On average, 60 percent of those with the disease will survive more than five years.
• Oral cancer affects almost twice as many men as women.

Risk Factors
• An estimated 25% of oral cancer patients have no known risk factors.
• Alcohol and tobacco remain the greatest risk factors (and using them in combination increases the risk 15 times over the use of one or the other);
• Infection with the sexually transmitted HPV16 virus has been linked to a subset of oral cancers.
• Historically, oral cancer has been a disease of those ages 40+, but its incidence in those under 40 has been climbing.
• Prolonged sun or tanning bed exposure is a risk factor for lip cancer.
• Smokeless tobacco is not a safe alternative to cigarettes – users face a 400% greater chance of oral cancer than non-users.

Possible Signs and Symptoms
• While you may have no symptoms at all, you should see your oral and maxillofacial surgeon or dentist if you experience any of the following:
  - A sore on the lip or in the mouth that does not heal
  - A lump or thickening on the lips or gums or in the mouth
  - A white or red patch on the gums, tongue, tonsils or lining of the mouth
  - Bleeding, pain or numbness in the lip or mouth
  - Change in voice
  - Loose teeth or dentures that no longer fit well
  - Trouble chewing or swallowing or moving the tongue or jaw
  - Swelling of the jaw
  - Sore throat or feeling that something is caught in the throat

Early Detection
• Performing a self-examination regularly increases the chance of identifying changes or new growths early.
• If you have risk factors, also see your oral and maxillofacial surgeon or dentist for an oral examination at least annually.
• The earlier the cancer is detected, the easier the treatment and the greater the chance of a cure.

Source: National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health