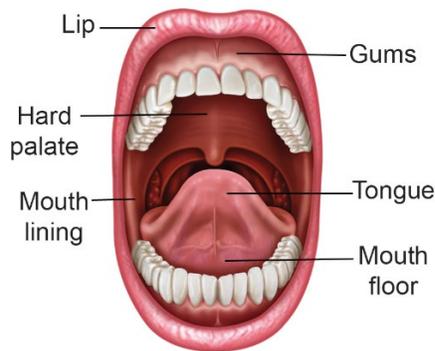


Oral Cancer

Oral cancer can happen in the mouth, lips, and jaw:

- Front two-thirds of the tongue
- Gums
- Hard or soft palate
- Mouth/cheek lining
- Mouth floor



How is Oral Cancer Treated?

Surgery is often the first treatment for oral cancer. Your surgeon will take out the cancer and some of the healthy tissue around it. Often, the surgeon will also take out some lymph nodes in the neck to see if cancer has spread from the mouth area.

You may need reconstructive surgery to repair parts of the mouth or neck after the cancer surgery.

If your windpipe is blocked, the surgeon will put in a tube so you can breathe. You may also need a feeding tube to help you eat. Other tubes will drain fluid from the surgery wound. All these tubes will be removed as you heal.

Facial prosthetics. A facial prosthetic, an artificial body part, may help restore function and appearance after surgery. Talk with your cancer care team about this before your surgery. Huntsman Cancer Institute's Facial Prosthetics Service can work with your surgeon to make a realistic prosthesis.

What Happens after Surgery?

The surgeon will take out all the cancer that can be seen. You may need other treatments to make sure all the cancer is gone.

Chemotherapy kills cancer cells with strong medicines.

Radiation therapy kills cancer cells with high-energy rays. Sometimes a machine makes the energy and sends it to the cancer area. This is called *external radiation*. You should get a dental exam before radiation therapy starts. Your dentist should treat any existing problems. If you use tobacco, it is best to quit before treatment starts. Quitting tobacco can help radiation therapy work better. The Cancer Learning Center can help you with resources to quit tobacco use.

Your Cancer Care Team

Your cancer care team may include these doctors:

- Head and neck surgeon
- Medical oncologist
- Radiation oncologist

Surgery for oral cancer can change the way you speak and eat. Your cancer care team may also include people to help you cope with these changes:

- Speech therapist
- Dietitian
- Social worker

Be sure to talk with your cancer care team about any questions or concerns you may have.

For more information about oral cancer, contact the G. Mitchell Morris Cancer Learning Center at Huntsman Cancer Institute:

Visit: 1950 Circle of Hope, 6th floor of HCI's hospital

Call: 1-888-424-2100 toll free

Text: 801-528-1112 (text only)

Chat live: www.huntsmancancer.org/clc

Email: cancerinfo@hci.utah.edu