

# Dentist toolkit helps in fight against oral cancer

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A University of Liverpool researcher has helped develop a GP and dentist toolkit to help detect oral cancer.

Oral cancer is now the tenth most common cancer in men according to new figures released by Cancer Research UK today. This latest data shows around 7,300 people were diagnosed with oral cancer in the UK in 2012 and twice as many men than women diagnosed with the disease.

Due to the sharp rise in oral cancer cases, Cancer Research UK in collaboration with Professor Richard Shaw at the University's Institute of Translational Medicine, has launched a new toolkit for dentists and GPs to help try and spot the disease earlier.

## **Prevention**

The new health professional's toolkit features images of signs and symptoms and outlines how GPs and dentists should refer patients for further tests. Health professionals also accrue credit for their continued professional development by completing the toolkit.

Professor Shaw, also a head and neck surgeon at Aintree University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: "We know that the vast majority of oral cancer cases could be prevented, so it's important that people know how to reduce the risk of the disease through lifestyle factors.

"Alongside this, it's vital that GPs and dentists can spot signs and symptoms of the disease to help catch it early and that they feel confident in knowing the next steps they should take in referring patients for further tests."

## **Cases increasing**

Over the last decade, cases of oral cancer have risen from around 4,500 back in 2002. The incidence rate of the disease has increased by a third over ten years, rising from 9 per 100,000 people in 2002 to 12 per

100,000 in 2012.

There are around 2,300 people who die from oral cancer in the UK every year, around 1,500 men and around 770 women. Approximately nine out of 10 [oral cancer](#) cases in the UK are linked to major lifestyle and other risk factors.

Higher smoking rates in men are largely responsible for the greater number of cases in men and an estimated 70% of oral and pharyngeal cancers in males in the UK are linked to tobacco smoking.

**More information:** For more information about the toolkit please visit: [bit.ly/1MIPVMW](https://bit.ly/1MIPVMW)

Provided by University of Liverpool

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