

# Dental care may benefit patients scheduled for cancer surgery

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Preoperative oral care by a dentist may help reduce postoperative complications in patients who undergo cancer surgery, according to a new *BJS* (*British Journal of Surgery*) study.

Of 509,179 patients studied, 16% received preoperative oral care from a dentist. When a surgeon requested that a dentist provide preoperative oral care to a patient with cancer, the dentist checked the patient's oral condition, provided professional tooth cleaning, taught the patient self-cleaning methods for the teeth, and provided any treatment needed.

In the study, 15,724 patients (3.09%) developed [postoperative pneumonia](#) and 1734 (0.34%) died within 30 days of surgery. After adjustments, preoperative oral care by a [dentist](#) was linked with a decrease in postoperative pneumonia (3.28% versus 3.76%) and death within 30 days (0.30% versus 0.42%).

"The findings could help improve strategies for the prevention of [postoperative complications](#)," the authors wrote.

**More information:** M. Ishimaru et al, Preoperative oral care and effect on postoperative complications after major cancer surgery, *British Journal of Surgery* (2018). DOI: [10.1002/bjs.10915](https://doi.org/10.1002/bjs.10915)

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