



**Let's talk about
mouth cancer.**

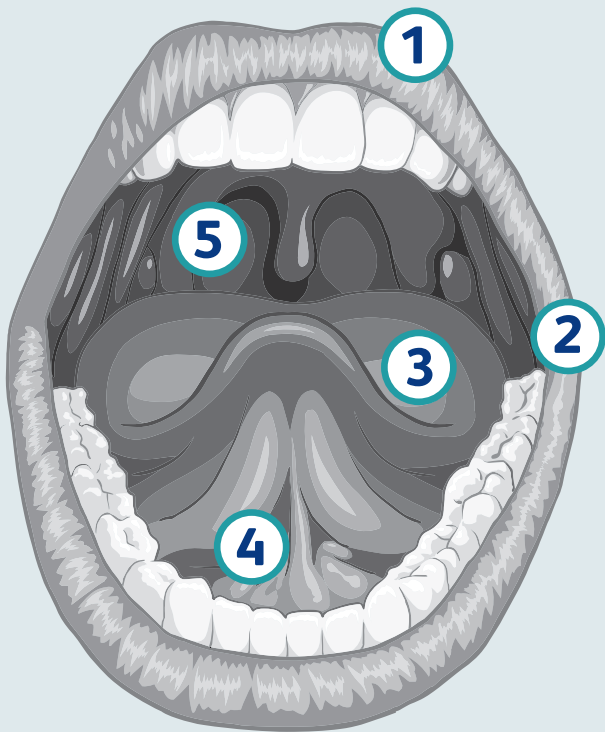
Caring for Smiles is working with the Scottish charity **Let's Talk About Mouth Cancer** to raise awareness of mouth cancer for people who are not able to check their own mouths for signs.

Carrying Out Mouth Checks

Ensure the person is comfortable before you carry out mouth checks. If the person does not have the capacity to consent, follow the usual procedures.

Before following steps 1 to 5, remove any dentures. Use a good light source, e.g. a **Caring for Smiles** pen torch, and always follow infection control procedures.

Keep in mind that any change in a person's normal response to oral care may be due to discomfort or pain. This should never be ignored and should be reported to a senior member of staff.



1

Lips

Very gently draw down on the person's lips and look inside for any sores or changes in colour.

2

Cheeks

Gently draw out the cheek to look on the inside. Look for any red or white patches.

3

Tongue

Ask the person to stick out their tongue. Look at the surface for any changes in colour and texture. Look at one side first, then the other. Look for any swelling or ulcers. Ask the person to touch the roof of their mouth with their tongue and check the underside.

4

Floor of the mouth

Check the floor of the mouth for any colour changes that are unusual.

5

Roof of the mouth

Ask the person to tilt their head back and open their mouth wide to check the roof of their mouth. Look to see if there are any ulcers or changes in colour.

Why check for mouth cancer?

- If mouth cancer is found early, the person has a much greater chance of surviving.
- The early signs of mouth cancer are often visible. However, many people in care homes rarely have their mouth checked.

Who is at higher risk?

- People who are over 65 years old and those who smoke and/or drink alcohol to excess (or have done so in the past) will be at higher risk of mouth cancer.

What should I look out for?

- Red or white patches.
- Lumps in the mouth that grow.
- Ulcers that do not heal after two weeks.
- Persistent soreness in the mouth.

What to do if you have any concerns

- Raise these with a senior member of staff immediately.
- Contact the person's dentist or GP. Generally, a dentist is the best person to look at suspected signs of mouth cancer but if the person does not have a dentist, don't delay and refer to the person's GP.

For more information

- Contact your local Caring for Smiles team




- www.ltamc.org
- www.facebook.com/letstalkaboutmouthcancer
- **Twitter: @couldbeUrmouth**

Let's Talk About Mouth Cancer is a Scottish charitable incorporated organisation (SC045100)

This resource may also be made available on request in the following formats:



 **0131 314 5300**

 **nhs.healthscotland-alternativeformats@nhs.net**

Published by NHS Health Scotland

1 South Gyle Crescent
Edinburgh EH12 9EB

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