



Oral Cancer: Early detection is your best defense

Margaret A. Roth, DMD

April is Oral Cancer Awareness month. Many of us know at least one person affected by this disease, but there is still a low awareness of it. Did you know that every year almost 60,000 new cases of oral cancer are diagnosed in the US? As **the sixth most common cancer** worldwide, we want to shed light on a disease that will kill one person every hour of every day this year.

When you have your regular check-up, your dentist and hygienist also perform an **oral cancer screening**. This involves looking for any irregularities of your soft tissues and or lumps and swellings that may be present in and around your oral cavity. Any lesions that are suspicious may require further testing with a biopsy, which an oral surgeon typically performs.

What are the risk factors for oral cancer? As with other cancers, using tobacco (smokeless or smoking) and drinking alcohol frequently or excessively increase your risk. Seventy percent of certain oral cancers are caused by a common virus, Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), which is passed through sexual contact. Other risks include poor oral hygiene and poor diet and nutrition, as well as excessive sun exposure to the lips.

Reducing these risk factors, considering the HPV vaccine, eating healthy and getting regular check-ups and screenings for early detection can all help keep you safe from the devastating effects of oral cancer. If you have any of the first signs of oral cancer, you should see a dental or medical provider immediately. These signs include a swelling or sore that will not go away, difficulty or painful swallowing, loose teeth, or white or red patches on the mouth, tongue, or gums. Treatment may include surgery, radiation and chemotherapy.

Early detection is important for increasing the survival rates and lessening the destruction from the disease, so get those regular check-ups. If it's been a while, give us a call, and we can get you set up. And, for the month of April, both locations will be doing **FREE oral cancer screenings**-even for non-patients. Tell your friends and family to call for an appointment today!



Hygiene Corner: Xerostomia

Dawn Galuntucci, RDH



- ☐ **Stay hydrated with plenty of water!**
- ☐ **Do not use any mouth rinses that contain alcohol.**
- ☐ **Avoid sipping sugary and acidic drinks throughout the day. Sugar and acid make the pH in our mouth stay acidic and increase our chances of developing cavities, especially if you have a dry mouth.**
- ☐ **Consider having a fluoride treatment at your cleaning appointments to protect and strengthen your teeth.**
- ☐ **Using dry mouth aids can be helpful. Ask your dentist and dental hygienist at your next appointment what they recommend.**

What is Xerostomia?

Xerostomia (ZEROSTOMIA) is a condition that affects millions. It affects women nine times more than men and 20% of our elderly population. Simply put, xerostomia is a dry mouth. There are three stages of xerostomia: mild, moderate and severe. Most people that have mild xerostomia are unaware of any changes in their saliva, which is why it is often missed. But for those that suffer from moderate to severe xerostomia, noticeable changes can be seen in the mouth and a person's quality of life can be affected.

The most common cause of dry mouth is medications. Over 500 medications can cause xerostomia. See your printout from your pharmacy to see if any of your medications have the potential to cause dry mouth. Radiation and/ or chemotherapy treatments, especially for head and neck cancers, are also causes, as well as autoimmune diseases such as Diabetes Type 1 & 2, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Lupus, and Sjogrens syndrome. Additionally, smoking and nerve damage are directly related.

Here are some symptoms to look out for if you suspect you may have xerostomia:

- Do you take 2 or more medications daily?
- Do certain foods like bread or crackers stick to your palate or get stuck in your throat?
- Does your mouth usually feel dry even during the day?
- Do you get thirsty at night and get out of bed to drink fluids?
- Does your mouth usually become drier when you speak?

Why is it so important to treat Xerostomia?

- increased plaque and cavities, especially at the gumline
- increased risk of gum inflammation and periodontal disease
- can alter your taste and make it difficult to swallow.
- increased risk of developing Oral Candidiasis (yeast infection) in the mouth and throat.

How is Xerostomia Treated? There is no cure for xerostomia, but there are preventative measures that can be implemented in your daily routine to combat the effects of a dry mouth.



Dental Appliances: keep them clean, keep you healthy!

Oral appliances such as nightguards, retainers and sleep apnea devices need to be cleaned every morning. Our mouths are full of bacteria, and those levels increase at night. In order to keep your appliance from becoming a petri dish of germs, use your toothbrush with a small amount of anti-bacterial liquid soap or dishwashing liquid to clean it inside and out and rinse it well to prevent the taste of soap from lingering on the appliance. It is best to let your appliance air dry with the case open in a safe place away from pets. Do not use toothpaste on your appliance, as it is abrasive and can make micro-scratches on the surface of the appliance that end up attracting more bacteria, stains, and build-up. Some appliances, such as hard retainers, can be soaked in hydrogen peroxide to help cleanse them and remove stains. Please check with your dental care provider before using peroxide on your appliance, however. Also, remember to bring your appliance in for your cleanings (we can clean them while you get your teeth cleaned) and any restorative treatments, such as fillings or crowns. And, remember to transport it in a case marked with your name and number to keep it safe and keep you smiling!



Rocky Creek Announcements

We are blessed to announce that 2025 is bringing FOUR new additions to our Rocky Creek family!

Lauren, an assistant at both our Eastside and Cleveland Park locations, is due in April with her second child—a girl that will be named Eleanor Elizabeth after her grandmother and great grandmother. **Ashley**, a business and chairside assistant at Cleveland Park is thrilled to be welcoming her first baby, a boy she plans to name Boyce, late this summer. **Jay**, one of our assistants at the Eastside, is due this October. This will also be her first. Jay, her husband, and their dog Honey, are excited for their new addition!

Dr. Elliott and his wife, Blair, and their two year old, Elizabeth Blake, are also expecting! Hampton will be due this summer. Congrats to all our expanding crew! And after 3 new additions last year, we have to suggest you be careful about drinking the water around here!



Win a Spa Gift for Mom!

We love making our patients smile! Post a picture of your Mom's smile OR your smile on our Facebook or Instagram Mother's Day Giveaway Post and you will be entered to win a **\$150 spa gift certificate** to Woodhouse Spa! See our upcoming posts for more details!



Recipe Corner: Best Meatloaf Ever



Ingredients:

- 2 pounds ground beef
- 1 cup crushed ritz crackers
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1/3 cup onion, finely chopped
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 3/4 cup ketchup
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp worcestershire sauce

Serves 6-8, total time: 2 hrs

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 9x13 casserole dish with cooking spray and set aside. In a large bowl, combine the ground beef, crackers, egg, milk, 1/2 cup ketchup, onion, salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Mix together with your hands until thoroughly combined.
2. Pour the mixture into the prepared dish and spread evenly. Bake in the preheated oven for 1-1 1/2 hours, time varies depending on oven.
3. In a small bowl, combine 3/4 cup ketchup, brown sugar, and worcestershire sauce. Mix well. Spread the mixture evenly over the meatloaf halfway through baking. Let meatloaf sit for 15 minutes before slicing and serving.

Recipe by: Lacey Dill



Meet Our Staff: Lacey, Patient Coordinator at Eastside

Lacey has been a part of the dental field for many years, starting her career as a dental assistant back in 2004. She worked in pediatrics before taking some time off to focus on being a stay-at-home mom. After more than a decade, she returned to the field and joined us at RCDC last July where she has become a valuable asset to our team.

Outside of work, Lacey's life is filled with love and adventure. She enjoys spending time with her two daughters, Bella (14) and Willow (9), whether it's playing games, exploring the great outdoors, or traveling to new places. When she's not with her girls, Lacey enjoys hanging out with friends, and enjoying time together with her boyfriend, Lee. We hope you'll join us in welcoming Lacey as a part of our team!



Rocky Creek Dental Care
1322 E. Washington Street
Suite D1
Greenville, SC 29607

The Doctors and Team at Rocky Creek Dental Care appreciate you very much, and we look forward to seeing you at your next visit. The greatest compliment that you can give to our practice is to refer your friends and family!

Dr. Margaret Roth

Dr. Myles Elliott

Dr. John Piccione



**We'd love
to hear from you!**

Leave us a review on Google

Our Mission Statement

- To enthusiastically treat patients with a commitment to sound quality treatments and unyielding pursuit of patient comfort
- To always ask ourselves how we can improve the care we can provide
- To use the golden rule as a means of professional integrity, honesty and patient advocacy
- To grow our family of patients without compromise to our mission

