



APRIL
CANCER
AWARENESS

Survivorship Care at the Brown Cancer Center
We are all survivors from day one and beyond

APRIL 2019



**Testicular
Cancer**



**Head & Neck
Cancer**



**Esophageal
Cancer**

Importance of Dental Care with Head & Neck Cancers

If you have just been diagnosed with a cancer in the head and neck region, you probably are trying to learn as much as you can about your condition, researching the best treatment options, and coping with your range of emotions. You may not be thinking about getting a good dental check-up, but you should.

One of the first referrals made for any patient whose treatment includes chemotherapy or radiation to the head and/or neck is the Maxillofacial Dental Oncology Clinic. That's because these treatments to the facial area may temporarily or permanently damage the saliva glands. A common side effect of radiation is "dry mouth."



Saliva contains antibacterial components that fight tooth decay and gum disease. The lack of saliva opens the door for bacteria, often leading to severe damage to teeth and gums. Dry mouth can lead to other serious oral conditions in teeth, gums, salivary glands and jawbones. These side effects can hurt and make it hard to eat, speak and swallow, affecting your quality of life.

Our dental oncologist will meet with you to determine

what effects the proposed cancer treatment will have on your mouth. The goal is to alert patients as early as possible to prevent any damage from occurring. Prevention is much more effective than trying to fix the problem after it occurs. After your initial consultation, we will contact your dentist to discuss the recommended course of treatment.

At the Brown Cancer Center, we strongly believe your dentist is an important partner in your treatment plan. Before your cancer treatment begins, your dentist may recommend special toothpaste, extra brushing and more frequent dental visits to monitor the situation.

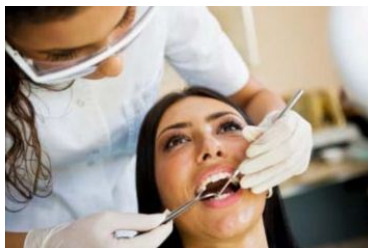
Continued on Back

Oral Hygiene Tips for Cancer Patients

- ◇ Have your teeth cleaned before cancer treatment and then every 3-4 months after completion of treatment.
- ◇ Remove any partial or complete dentures from your mouth while sleeping.
- ◇ Use a denture brush and water to clean your dentures, and soak in an antimicrobial denture solution, if necessary.
- ◇ Use a soft bristled toothbrush with toothpaste when brushing. If your mouth is sore, use a "toothette" or washcloth.
- ◇ Floss and use fluoride daily with your natural teeth.
- ◇ If you are experiencing dry mouth, drink lots of water, use sugarless gum or hard candy, and/or use a saliva substitute.
- ◇ Avoid mouthwashes with alcohol or full strength peroxide. Alternatively, you can use baking soda or salt water solutions.
- ◇ Avoid tobacco products and alcoholic drinks.
- ◇ Avoid hard, sharp and crunchy foods, foods that are hot, spicy, sugary and acidic.

Importance of Dental Care with Head & Neck Cancers

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Your dentist may also take the following steps:

- Identify and treat existing infections, problem teeth and tissue injury or trauma.
 - Stabilize or eliminate potential sites of infection.
 - Remove orthodontic bands if certain types of chemotherapy are planned, or if the bands will be in the radiation field.
 - Evaluate dentures and appliances for comfort and fit.
 - Perform oral surgery, if needed, at least two weeks prior to the initiation of radiation therapy to allow healing, and at least seven to 10 days before myelosuppressive therapy (treatment that inhibits blood cell production) begins.
- In adults receiving radiation, extract teeth that may pose a future problem.
 - In children, consider extracting highly mobile primary teeth and teeth that are expected to exfoliate during treatment.
 - Instruct patients on oral hygiene, use of fluoride gel, nutrition and the need to avoid tobacco and alcohol. We can provide you with options and recommendations, but your dentist will need to help you follow through.

The Maxillofacial Dental Oncology Clinic also plays an important role for patients whose conditions are disfiguring, as well as debilitating. When surgery is part of the cancer treatment, portions of the oral cavity and the head and neck region are removed to cure and/or control a tumor. Sometimes the surgical removal of part of the mouth or throat makes swallowing and speaking difficult or impossible. Plastic surgery to repair these areas may not be an option. They may require a prosthesis to function or to be more aesthetically pleasing. Our dental oncologist is part of the Brown Cancer Center's Head and Neck Multidisciplinary team and is consulted before surgical treatment that will result in permanent removal of facial features, or parts of the mouth or esophagus. In these cases, we meet with the patient before surgery and make molds to recreate the parts that will be removed. Whenever possible, the prosthesis is placed the same time the surgery is done to remove that part of the mouth or throat. We do this so that when our patient wakes up, he or she can feel as normal as possible. When it is not possible to place the actual prosthetic device during the initial surgery, a prosthesis that can be removed for treatment is inserted. For example, a temporary mouth prosthesis is used during the period of radiation therapy. After the treatment is complete, a permanent prosthesis is placed. Our primary goal is to help our patients return to a normal lifestyle. Patients receive follow-up care for six months to one year after treatment.

Zafrulla Khan, D.D.S., M.S.

Mark Your Calendars!

Free Oral Screenings

The University of Louisville Brown Cancer Center will be offering free oral cancer screenings at the opening game for the Louisville Bats on April 11th from 5:15PM until 8:30PM. Screenings will be offered at Hall of Fame Pavilion (no ticket required) from 5:15PM until the start of the game and the inside game concourse (ticket required) from 5:30PM until 8:30PM. For more information, call (502) 561-7444.

Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Cancer Risk Among African Americans

Join Kentucky African Americans Against Cancer (KAAAC) and Dr. Erica Sutton of UofL Physicians who will be speaking at Gilda's Club on April 15th from 6-7 PM to discuss cancer risk among African Americans. For more information contact Gilda's Club at (502) 583-0075.

Knock Cancer Out of the Park, 19th Annual Cancer Survivor Celebration

Come celebrate at Louisville Slugger Field on May 24 with the Louisville Bats! There will be a pre-game celebration at 5:30PM, recognition of cancer survivors at 6:40PM, and the Bats will play at 7PM. Fireworks will follow the game. RSVP by May 17. To RSVP or for more information please call the Kentucky Cancer Program at (502) 852-6318.