



LS Dental

Ipoh · Dr. Kent Teoh

PATIENT GUIDE

Mouth cancer: catch it early

Found early, it is highly treatable.
The signs are easy to see — if you
know what to look for.

● **A sore that won't heal**

● **Red or white patches**

● **A lump or numbness**

Caught early, it's **highly treatable**

Mouth cancer can affect the **lips, tongue, gums, cheeks, floor or roof of the mouth, and throat**. It often begins as a small patch or a sore that doesn't heal — painless at first, which is exactly why it's missed.

● **Found early**

Small and local — often **highly treatable**, with simpler treatment and a very good outlook.

Found late

Spread to the neck or beyond — harder treatment and a **much poorer outlook**.

● **The simple rule**

2
weeks

Any sore, ulcer, lump, or red/white patch that **hasn't healed in two weeks** should be checked — don't wait for it to hurt.

Warning signs to check

Most of these turn out to be harmless — but any that **last more than two weeks** deserve a look. A **red patch** is the most worrying of all.



A red patch

most likely to be serious — get it checked



A white patch

that won't rub or wipe off



An ulcer that won't heal

still there after 2 weeks



A lump or thickening

in the mouth, lip or neck



Numbness or loose teeth

with no dental reason



Trouble swallowing

or a lasting sore throat / voice change



One-sided, painless, and lasting — that combination matters most. **Two weeks is the rule.**

The main risk factors

Most mouth cancers are linked to habits we can change. In Malaysia, **betel quid (sireh-pinang)** is a leading cause — and tobacco with alcohol together multiply the risk.

BETEL QUID / ARECA NUT

Chewing **sireh-pinang** (with or without tobacco) is a major cause in our region — the risk is real even without smoking.

TOBACCO

Cigarettes, and especially **smokeless tobacco** held in the mouth — the single biggest avoidable cause worldwide.

ALCOHOL

Heavy drinking raises risk — and **with tobacco the two multiply**, not just add.

HPV & SUN

HPV infection raises throat-cancer risk; **sun exposure** raises lip-cancer risk.

The hopeful part: stopping betel quid and tobacco lowers your risk over time — it's never too late to cut it.

Check your own **mouth**

Once a month, in good light with a mirror, look and feel around your whole mouth. You're checking for anything **new, one-sided, or not healing**.

- **Look and feel, step by step**

1. Lips — outside and inside
2. Gums, top and bottom
3. Tongue — top, tip, and **both sides**
4. Underneath the tongue & floor of mouth
5. Inside the cheeks
6. Roof of the mouth
7. Feel the **neck** for lumps
8. Note anything there over 2 weeks



Your dentist checks too: a routine dental visit includes a quick screen of these areas. If something looks suspicious, a small sample (biopsy) gives the answer.

Prevent it & **act early**

You can meaningfully cut your risk — and early action is what saves lives.



Stop betel quid & tobacco
the biggest single step you can take



Limit alcohol
especially alongside smoking



Protect your lips from sun
balm with SPF; eat plenty of fruit & veg



Regular dental check-ups
so changes are caught early

A sore or patch that won't heal in 2 weeks?

Get it looked at — most are harmless, and the ones that aren't are far easier to treat when caught early.



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