

30<sup>th</sup> October 2020

## Denplan supports Mouth Cancer Action Month as cases reach record high

- *New figures show there have been 8,722 new cases of mouth cancer in the UK last year.*
- *This is an increase of 58% compared to ten years ago and 97% compared to 20 years ago.*
- *Data released in a new report to coincide with November's Mouth Cancer Action Month.*
- *The Oral Health Foundation and Denplan are joining together to help dental professionals raise awareness to patients and communities with a series of webinars and digital resources.*

New cases of mouth cancer in the United Kingdom have risen to a record high, according to the findings of a new report. Figures collected by the [Oral Health Foundation](#) show that 8,722 people in the UK were diagnosed with the disease last year, increasing by 97% since 2000.

Mouth cancer cases in the UK have soared for the 11th year in a row and have more than doubled within the last generation.

The findings are part of the charity's new State of Mouth Cancer UK Report 2020/21 and have been released to coincide with November's Mouth Cancer Action Month.

Dr Nigel Carter OBE, Chief Executive of the Oral Health Foundation, believes with mouth cancer cases continuing to rise, more must be done to raise awareness of the disease.

**Dr Carter says:** "While many cancers are seeing a reduction in the number of people affected, mouth cancer is one of very few that is sadly going the other way. Established risk factors like smoking and excessive alcohol have been joined by emerging causes like the human papillomavirus (HPV). This has changed the profile of the disease quite considerably over recent years and mouth cancer can now affect anybody.

"The disease can have a devastating and lasting effect on a person's life. It can change how somebody speaks, it makes eating and drinking more difficult, and often leads to changes a person's physical appearance. Because of this, it also takes a heavy toll on a person's mental health too.

"One of the biggest challenges we face regarding mouth cancer is how little educational support it receives from government and public health bodies. As part of Mouth Cancer

Action Month, we are appealing for your help to improve awareness of the disease so that more people are able to recognise the early warning signs.”

Statistics from governing health bodies across the UK show around two-in-three (67%) mouth cancers are recorded in men while three-in-four (78%) are in the over 55’s.

Mouth cancer is most likely to occur in the tongue, contributing to more than one-in-three (34%) cases. Mouth cancer can also appear in the tonsils, the roof and floor of the mouth, lips and gums.

The early warning signs of the disease include mouth ulcers that do not heal within three weeks, red or white patches in the mouth, or unusual lumps and swellings. Persistent hoarseness could also be a symptom.

**Dr Catherine Rutland, Clinical Director at Denplan, part of Simplyhealth**, speaks about the importance of continuing our still supporting support for Mouth Cancer Action Month since its inception twenty years ago:

“Denplan has always championed the importance of highlighting mouth cancer to patients through our member dentists. This is our 20th year sponsoring the campaign, and the amazing work that the Oral Health Foundation do, and now it is more important than ever. The limited access to dental care as a result of the pandemic will significantly reduce the number of people who are picked up and referred early. Early diagnosis vastly improves prognosis and the risk of complications.

“As dental professionals, we have the opportunity to lead conversations on mouth cancer and make sure that patients are aware of the risks, signs and symptoms. If we can help people to make positive lifestyle choices, remain vigilant to any changes in their mouth, and seek professional help at the earliest stage, we can help to save lives.”

In aid of Mouth Cancer Action Month, Dental Update – in partnership with Denplan, Oral-B and the Oral Health Foundation – has put together a series of webinars throughout November. These webinars bring together a range of expert presenters are free to attend.

Registrations are now open [here](#).

The charity has also created a range of digital resources for you to display in waiting rooms, share via email and practices newsletters, and on social media. All of these can be accessed from the Mouth Cancer Action Month digital toolkit, which you can download [here](#).

By registering your support at [www.mouthcancer.org](http://www.mouthcancer.org), the Oral Health Foundation will send you a free poster to display in your practice, and an enamel Blue Ribbon Badge.

**ENDS**

Oral Health Foundation (2020) ‘State of Mouth Cancer UK Report 2020/21’ Published November 2020, online at [www.mouthcancer.org](http://www.mouthcancer.org).

**Notes to editors:**

**The Oral Health Foundation** is the leading national charity working to improve oral health. Our goal is to improve people's lives by reducing the harm caused by oral diseases – many of which are entirely preventable. Established nearly 50 years ago, we continue to provide expert, independent and impartial advice on all aspects of oral health to those who need it most. We work closely with Government, dental and health professionals, manufacturers, the dental trade, national and local agencies and the public, to achieve our mission of addressing the inequalities which exist in oral health, changing people's lives for the better. Visit [www.dentalhealth.org](http://www.dentalhealth.org) for more information.

Mouth Cancer Action Month is the UK's biggest charity campaign for mouth cancer awareness. Mouth Cancer Action Month marks 20 years of campaigning in 2020, and since then, the Oral Health Foundation has invested nearly £2 million on improving awareness and education around mouth cancer. Taking place throughout November, the campaign is supported by thousands of people who help share the important messages of being 'mouthaware' and 'if in doubt, get checked out'.

**About Denplan, Part of Simplyhealth:** Denplan is the UK's leading dental payment plan specialist with more than 6,700 member dentists nationwide caring for approximately 1.6 million patients registered to a Denplan product.

Denplan also provide a wide range of professional services for its member dentists and their practice teams, including the Denplan Quality Programme and Denplan Excel Certification Programme. Plus regulatory advice, business and marketing consultancy services and networking opportunities.

For more information about Denplan, part of Simplyhealth:

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