

Minister of Health



Ministre de la Santé

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April is Oral Health Month, an excellent time to acknowledge the impact that oral health has on the overall health of Canadians. This year, to mark Oral Health Month, the Journal of the Canadian Dental Association is focusing on oral cancer - a serious condition affecting any part of the mouth including the lips, tongue, and gums.

Oral cancer is a disease that affects many Canadians. In fact, the most recent statistics released by the Canadian Cancer Society in 2007 illustrate that across the country, 3,200 Canadians developed new cases of oral cancer, while 1,100 died as a result of the disease.

Canadians can reduce the risk of developing oral cancer and other related diseases by abstaining from tobacco use. Tobacco reduces blood flow to the gums, which in turn do not get the oxygen and nutrients needed to stay healthy and prevent bacterial infection. Smoking and chewing tobacco dramatically raises one's risk of both developing, and dying from oral cancer.

Fortunately, oral cancer can be successfully treated if detected at an early stage. Canada's dental profession is uniquely positioned to make a real difference in the fight against this cancer and to solidify its position as the world leader in early detection.

As Canada's Minister of Health, I commend the Journal of the Canadian Dental Association for taking the opportunity to focus this month's edition on oral cancer and subsequently raising awareness of this disease with Canadians.

For more information on oral health and ways of minimizing the risk of developing oral diseases, your patients can visit Health Canada's It's Your Health article, written in consultation with the Canadian Dental Association: The Effects of Oral Health on Overall Health at:
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/iyh-vsv/life-vie/dent_e.html

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