

# Oral & Throat Cancer

## **Oral and Throat Cancer in the U.S.**

Oral and throat cancer is the 12th most common cancer in the U.S. According to the 1998 American Cancer Society, *Cancer Facts & Figures*, an estimated 30,300 new cases of oral and throat cancer were diagnosed in the U.S. Two thirds of the cases were in men, for whom it is the 8th most common cancer. The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) reports that 7,965 people in the U.S. died from oral and throat cancer. Through the 1980's and 1990's the incidence and mortality rates of this cancer have been decreasing.

In the U.S. an estimated 75% of oral and throat cancers are associated with tobacco or alcohol, alone or in combination.

## Risk Factors for Oral and Throat Cancer

- In the U.S. an estimated 75% of oral and throat cancers are associated with tobacco or alcohol, alone or in combination.
- A person who is a heavy smoker and drinker is 35 times more likely to get oral or throat cancer than a person who does not smoke or drink.
- Smokeless/chewed tobacco (snuff) can cause higher rates of this cancer.
- A diet low in fresh fruits and vegetables can promote oral and throat cancer.

## Prevention of Oral and Throat Cancer

- Not smoking and reducing alcohol intake are the most effective ways for Americans to reduce their chances of getting oral and throat cancer.
- A smoker's risk of getting oral and throat cancer can be cut in half within 5 years of quitting. Ten years after quitting, the risk may be close to a non-smoker's.

## Early Detection of Oral and Throat Cancer

### Why is it important?

- Cases detected early (local disease) have about an 82% chance of living for at least five more years.
- Cases detected at the distant stage (when disease has spread to another part of the body) have only a 26% chance of living for five more years.

## How to Improve your Chances of Detecting Oral and Throat Cancer Early

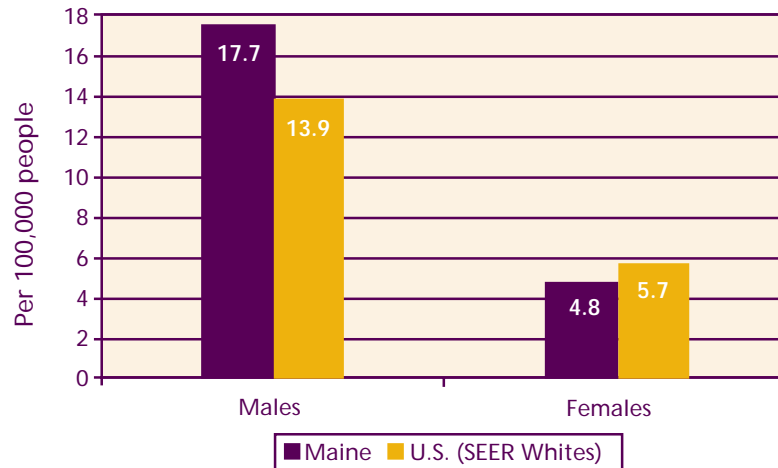
- See your dentist regularly and ask about being examined for these kinds of cancer.

## Burden of Oral and Throat Cancer in Maine

- Between 1997 and 1998 an average of 127 cases were diagnosed in men and 44 cases in women per year.
- 21 men and 12 women died from oral and throat cancer per year.
- Over 68% of the cases in Maine occur in people over 60 years old.

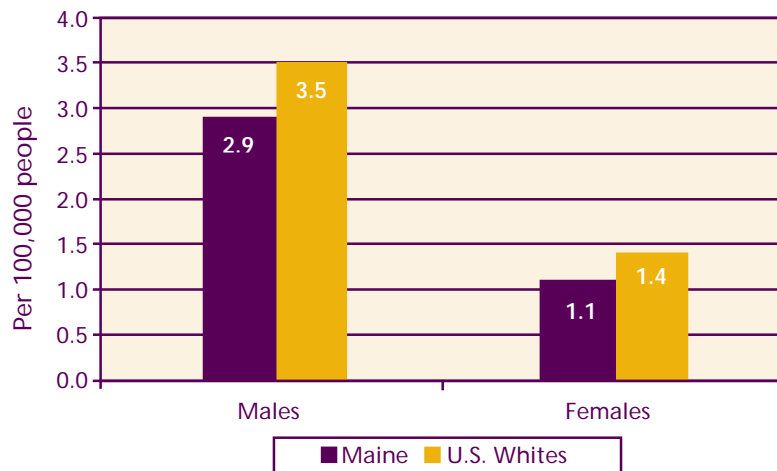
The age-adjusted incidence rate of oral and throat cancer in Maine men was significantly higher than the U.S. rate. The rate in Maine women was not different from the U.S. rate.

Age-Adjusted Incidence Rates by Sex, Maine and U.S.  
Oral and Throat Cancer, 1997-1998



The age-adjusted mortality rates for oral and throat cancer were not statistically different for men and women in Maine than in the U.S.

**Age-Adjusted Mortality Rates by Sex, Maine and U.S.**  
Oral and Throat Cancer, 1997-1998



Oral and throat cancer is more common as people age. The age-specific rates are much higher for men than for women, reflecting a higher use of tobacco products, including chewing tobacco, and intake of alcohol.

**Maine Age-Specific Incidence Rates**  
Oral and Throat Cancer, 1997-1998

