

TOBACCO, NICOTINE AND YOUR ORAL HEALTH

Individuals who
smoke more than 10
cigarettes per day are

4-5X
more likely

to develop oral
cancer than
non-smokers.

Gum Disease (Periodontal Disease)

Caused by an infection that destroys the bone surrounding and supporting your teeth. This bone holds the teeth to the jawbone to chew food.

Symptoms of Gum Disease

- Red, swollen, tender, bleeding gums
- Discharge (pus) coming from your gums
- Gums that are loose and pull away from your teeth
- A bad taste or bad breath
- Loose teeth. This can change the feel of your bite when your teeth are placed together
- Spaces opening between your teeth

Do you smoke, vape, dip, or use nicotine pouches?

Let your dental provider know today! It is very important for people who use tobacco or nicotine to visit their dentist regularly to keep their teeth and gums healthy and check for signs of oral cancer.

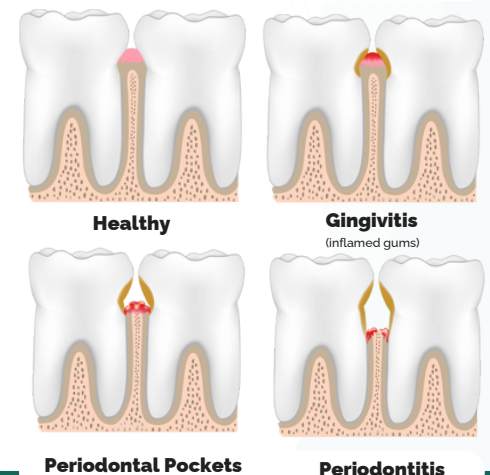
Vaping may be seen as a way to quit smoking. Yet vaping may make it harder to quit smoking completely which increases the risk of diseases associated with tobacco use, such as oral cancer.

When you vape, you inhale e-liquids (also called vaping juice) which, even when labeled 'nicotine-free', can contain harmful substances.

These include:

- Nicotine
- Heavy metals
- Volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- Cancer-causing chemicals

Stages of Gum Disease



IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO QUIT

Those who quit smoking have the same risk of developing oral cancer as non-smokers.

Risk for Disease and Cancer

People who smoke and drink alcohol have an **even greater risk of developing oral cancer** than those who use one or the other.

Early diagnosis is important so that treatment can start as early as possible. Early treatment can save your life and prevent disease from spreading to other areas of the body.

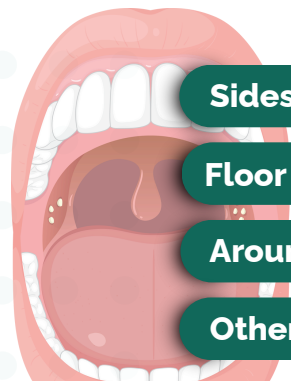
- Treatment for oral cancer includes surgery, radiotherapy, and chemotherapy.

Preventing Teeth and Gum Problems in Smokers

There are a number of things you can do to help prevent tooth and gum problems, including:

- **Try to quit smoking** – speak to your doctor or dentist or call the QuitlineNC for guidance and support.
- If you're finding it difficult to quit smoking, **try and reduce the number of cigarettes you smoke** to start off with.
- **Brush your teeth and gums twice a day** with fluoride toothpaste.

Oral cancer is most likely to occur ...



Sides of the tongue

Floor of the mouth

Around the lips

Other areas of the mouth

Most Common Oral Health Issues Among Smokers

1 **Gum Disease** (Periodontal Disease)

2 **Mouth Cancer**

3 **Smoker's Keratosis**

- Defined as a whitening of the soft tissue in the mouth

4 **Tooth Decay & Loss**

5 **Halitosis** (Bad Breath)

6 **Poor Healing After Tooth Removal**



- **Use dental floss** (for small gaps) or **interdental brushes** (for big gaps) once a day to clean between your teeth.
- **Visit your dentist every 6 to 12 months.** They can provide advice about the proper care of your teeth and gums at home and detect problems early. Regular visits can help maintain your oral and gum health.
- **If you are experiencing dry mouth**, make sure to **increase your water intake and chew sugar-free gum containing xylitol.** These two things alone will help stimulate your saliva flow and help prevent cavities. This is especially important if you take medications that cause dry mouth.
- **Limit alcohol and avoid recreational drugs.**



FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

