

### What If We Find Something?

In most cases, the VELscope exam will indicate that there is nothing to worry about. However, it is of course possible that some suspicious areas could be revealed. In that case, it could very well be that the suspicious-looking area is of little or no concern, such as if it is caused by chewing the inside of your cheek or by irritation from dentures or braces. If necessary, we may ask you to come back in a few weeks so that we may take another look.

If the area has improved in the meantime, we'll know that oral cancer was not involved. If the area has not improved, we will recommend further exams, which may include a biopsy that can be evaluated by an oral pathologist. In the unlikely event that the biopsy reveals cancerous or pre-cancerous tissues, you will be referred for appropriate treatment.

Fortunately, the survival rate for oral cancer discovered at early stages is extremely high. That is why it is so important that you have an oral cancer screening once a year, or twice a year if you smoke or chew tobacco. And it's also why we have invested in this new technology.

### Questions?

If you have any questions about oral cancer or the VELscope exam, please let us know. Your oral health is the key to your overall health, and we want to help you in any way we can.

# What every person needs to know about oral cancer.

(And what we're doing to help protect you from it.)



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**VELscope**  
The Oral Cancer Screening System

### **The Forgotten Disease**

Oral cancer is one of the few types of cancer that haven't experienced a significantly reduced mortality rate in the past 30 years. In fact, the number of North Americans developing oral cancer is three times the number who develop cervical cancer. Sadly, one North American dies of oral cancer every hour of every day.

The problem: Oral cancer is discovered in late stages about 70% of the time, and often that is simply too late.

### **If You're Sexually Active, You're At Risk.**

Oral cancer has traditionally been associated with tobacco usage, and it's true that the majority of oral cancer victims smoke or use chewing tobacco, consume alcohol and are over 40. But the group experiencing the highest growth rate of oral cancer incidence does not fit this traditional "at risk" profile. More and more, oral cancer is striking younger people who don't use tobacco or abuse alcohol.

In many cases, the cause appears to be one of two strains of the human papilloma virus (HPV-16 or HPV-18) that can be contracted during sexual intercourse and especially oral sex.

As a result, health care experts recommend annual oral cancer screenings for all adults aged 18 and older. If you smoke or use chewing tobacco, screenings are recommended every six months.

### **We Care...And We Can Help**

Our practice has purchased a state-of-the-art device called the VELscope® Oral Cancer Screening System. Along with our conventional oral screening exam, which includes looking inside your mouth for any lesions that might be visible to the naked eye and feeling your neck for any suspicious bumps, we can use the VELscope to literally see beneath the surface to detect potentially dangerous growths we might have otherwise missed.

The VELscope exam takes about two minutes as part of a regular hygiene check-up, involves no pain or inconvenience, and is completely safe. We think you will find the additional cost for this exam to be very reasonable, and it might be that the cost will be covered by your insurance company.

We think you'll appreciate the peace-of-mind this screening can provide.

