

News release

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For immediate release

Dentists spot signs of mouth cancer

Regularly attending dentist appointments could detect ulcers, sores and swelling in the mouth or tongue which are associated with mouth cancer

In the last three years, 32 people in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland have died from mouth cancer. Research has found that patients have a 90 per cent increased chance of survival if mouth cancer is detected early.

The warning coincides with the British Dental Health Foundation's national Mouth Cancer Action Month which runs until November 30 and this year is themed around early detection.

Philip Martin, dentist at The Dental Surgery on Winchester Avenue, Leicester, said: "Regular visits to your dentist will ensure that you are professionally screened for signs of mouth cancer. Talk to your dentist about how you can make small changes to improve your oral health."

If you need a dentist it's easier than ever before to find one. Both city and county dentists are currently accepting new patients. Call 0116 295 7017 to find one near to you.

Smoking is the most common cause of mouth cancer although excessive alcohol consumption and poor diet can contribute considerably to developing the illness.

Charles Clarke, 81, from Newtown Linford, said: "I had been diagnosed with a mouth condition, Lichen Planus for many years; it's a very painful condition which causes sores and lesions in the mouth.

"When new spots appeared on my tongue I thought nothing of it, however when they began to spread I went to my consultant who conducted a series biopsies and confirmed mouth cancer. I had my operation and now face a long recovery. I can no longer enjoy the spicy foods I used to as it is too painful to eat but you learn to adapt.

"If anyone notices anything unusual in their mouth or on their tongue, they must see their GP as soon as possible. If your dentist notices any changes you will be referred to your doctor for further advice. If cancer is caught early, it is easier to treat and the outlook will be a lot less painful."

Signs and symptoms of mouth cancer may include:

- Ulcers which do not heal within three weeks
- Red and white patches in the mouth
- Unusual lumps or swellings in the mouth

For more information on the signs and symptoms and mouth cancer log onto www.nhs.uk or www.mouthcancer.org To find an NHS dentist please contact the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland PCT Cluster customer services team on 0116 295 7011

ENDS

For interviews or more information please contact media officer Liz Thomas on 0116 295 7677 or liz.thomas@leicestercity.nhs.uk or senior media officer Caroline Higgs on 0116 295 7663 or caroline.higgs@lcr.nhs.uk.

Notes to editor:

In October 2010 NHS Leicester City and NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland joined forces to form a 'cluster', in line with the requirements of the Department of Health. Although we share one Cluster Board and our staff work across the city and county boundaries, we have not legally merged, and retain our separate statutory duties. Together we serve a population of more than a million people. Cluster formation is an interim stage in the reform of the NHS, involving on-going transfer of most local commissioning functions to GP-led clinical commissioning groups, in line with the Health and Social Care Bill, now before Parliament and the House of Lords.