Early Detection and Proper Treatment Can Cure Oral Cancers

At CIGNA Dental, we share in the national concern for the early detection of oral cancer and stress the importance of preventive dentistry and early intervention in the disease management process.

Therefore, we are pleased to inform you that effective January 1, 2006, CIGNA Dental will cover brush biopsy for members who are enrolled in the CIGNA Dental Care (DHMO), CIGNA Dental PPO (DPPO), or CIGNA Traditional (Dental Indemnity) plan.

There are two procedure codes for each brush biopsy:

- D7288 – in-office diagnostic procedure
- D0473 – laboratory analysis/pathology report

**Symptoms of Oral Cancer and Signs to Look For:**¹²

- Patches inside the mouth or on the lips that are white, a mixture of red and white, or red
- Patches that are white are the most common and sometimes become malignant
- Sore on the lip or in the mouth that won’t heal
- Lump in the neck
- Earache
- Pain, tenderness, or numbness anywhere in the mouth or on the lips
- Difficulty chewing, swallowing, speaking or moving the jaw or tongue

**Who is at Risk?**

Oral cancer is the sixth deadliest cancer in America. Despite advances in surgical techniques, radiation treatments and chemotherapy, survival rates remain low when compared to other cancers.²

Annually, approximately 28,000 Americans are diagnosed with oral cancer.¹

While oral cancer most often occurs in those who use tobacco in any form, we also know that alcohol use combined with smoking greatly increases risk. But more than 25% of oral cancers occur in people who do not smoke and have no other risk factors.¹

Today, it’s easier than ever to detect oral cancer.

**What is Brush Biopsy?**

Brush biopsy is a painless procedure which is used to gather [unusual] cells in mouth. The dentist uses a small brush to take a tissue specimen, which is then sent to a laboratory for analysis to determine the presence of pre-cancerous or cancerous cells.¹

The procedure is non-invasive and does not require surgery or anesthesia.
YOU and YOUR Dentist – Oral Cancer Detection

Regular Check-ups Include Painless Oral Cancer exams

Your regular checkup is a good time for your dentist to check your entire mouth for signs of cancer. While most dentists already perform this assessment, we encourage you to ask your dentist to perform a visual assessment for oral cancer as part of their routine dental exam.

Since certain lifestyle choices may increase risk for oral cancer, we also encourage you to discuss behaviors that may have an impact on your oral and overall health.

An oral cancer exam is totally painless. Basically, it is a visual assessment of all the tissues in and around your mouth. Your dentist will examine the roof of your mouth, the insides of your cheeks, and the underside of your tongue. This simple screening is a vital step in protecting your oral and overall health.

In about 10% of patients, the dentist may notice a flat, painless, white or red spot or a small sore. Although most of these are harmless, some are not. Harmful oral spots or sores often look identical to those that are harmless - testing can tell them apart.¹

To ensure that a spot or sore is not dangerous, your dentist may recommend a simple test, such as a brush biopsy, which can detect potentially dangerous cells when the disease is still at an early stage. Results may help determine the need for a surgical biopsy or other follow-up. The brush biopsy is approved for use in the United States.¹

Early Detection is the Key!

Remember to ask your dentist to perform an oral cancer evaluation during your next visit as well as every time you return for your regular dental check ups.

Oral Cancer Facts¹,²,³

- Approximately 28,000 new diagnoses of oral cancer occur each year in the United States.
- More than 8,000 deaths from oral cancer annually
- When detected late, oral cancer five-year survival rate is about 50%
- Oral Cancer is more likely to strike after age 40

¹ www.ada.org, October 2005
² National Cancer Institute, www.cancer.gov, October 2005
³ www.oralcancerfoundation.org

*CIGNA Dental refers to the following operating subsidiaries of CIGNA Corporation: Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, and CIGNA Dental Health, Inc., and its operating subsidiaries and affiliates. The CIGNA Dental Care plan is provided by CIGNA Dental Health Plan of Arizona, Inc., CIGNA Dental Health of California, Inc., CIGNA Dental Health of Colorado, Inc., CIGNA Dental Health of Delaware, Inc., CIGNA Dental Health of Florida, Inc., a Prepaid Limited Health Services Organization licensed under Chapter 636, Florida Statutes, CIGNA Dental Health of Kansas, Inc. (Kansas and Nebraska), CIGNA Dental Health of Kentucky, Inc., CIGNA Dental Health of Maryland, Inc., CIGNA Dental Health of Missouri, Inc., CIGNA Dental Health of New Jersey, Inc., CIGNA Dental Health of North Carolina, Inc., CIGNA Dental Health of Ohio, Inc., CIGNA Dental Health of Pennsylvania, Inc., CIGNA Dental Health of Texas, Inc., and CIGNA Dental Health of Virginia, Inc. In other states, the CIGNA Dental Care plan is underwritten by Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, and administered by CIGNA Dental Health, Inc. The CIGNA Dental PPO is underwritten or administered by Connecticut General Life Insurance Company with network management services provided by CIGNA Dental Health, Inc., and certain of its operating subsidiaries. In Texas, the Dental PPO product is referred to as the CIGNA Dental Choice Plan. In Arizona and Louisiana, the Dental PPO product is referred to as the CG Dental PPO. The CIGNA Traditional Indemnity plan is underwritten or administered by Connecticut General Life Insurance Company. In Arizona and Louisiana, the CIGNA Traditional Indemnity product is referred to as CG Traditional.

Cat #595850

12/05 ©2005 CIGNA Dental