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DENTAL MEDICINE

ORAL CANCER

What is oral cancer?

Oral cancer is the group of malignant tumors that affect the oral cavity (from the lips to the throat), most common on the floor of the mouth (mucosa below the tongue), lateral border of the tongue and soft palate, representing the 6th most prevalent cancer in the world.

What are the symptoms and the main risk factors?

The main signs and symptoms include the appearance of blemishes, of varying color (usually reddish or white), a non-healing wound or a more or less hardened mass, lumps, swelling, difficulty swallowing, chewing or speaking, feeling of persistent numbness, bleeding for no apparent reason or abnormal tooth mobility. However, most lesions are painless in their early stages, gradually becoming painful. Oral cancer is more common in men over 45 years of age, increasing considerably up to 65 years, however cases in young women are increasing. The main risk factors are smoking and alcohol consumption.

What is the best way to prevent its onset?

The natural form of prevention is to adopt a healthy lifestyle by regularly consuming fresh fruits and vegetables rich in antioxidants, avoiding tobacco use and decreasing or stopping alcohol consumption. It is important to be aware of the signs that your mouth shows, and regular self-examination should not be neglected. Participation in regular screenings and visits every 6 months to the dentist are also important in prevention.

What are the advantages of an early diagnosis?

Early diagnosis can significantly improve the prognosis, allowing treatment at an early stage and increasing the likelihood of surviving the disease or limiting the complications associated with its treatment.

If an injury is identified, what is the procedure?

If a suspicious lesion is identified, a biopsy may be advised to confirm the clinical diagnosis as well as its signs of malignancy from a histological point of view.