

# Oral Cavity & Pharynx Cancer in Iowa

Iowa's incidence rate of oral cavity & pharynx cancer is **#1** in the nation...

and it is **rising faster** than all other states.

In 2023, there will be an estimated **620 new cases**, **100 deaths**, and **4,670 survivors** in Iowa due to oral cavity & pharynx cancer.

These cancers & their treatments are expensive, and can lead to...

- Trouble speaking
- Trouble swallowing
- Poor quality of life
- Death

## Oral cavity & pharynx cancer

Oral cavity & pharynx cancers can start in many parts of the head and neck. Common sites include:

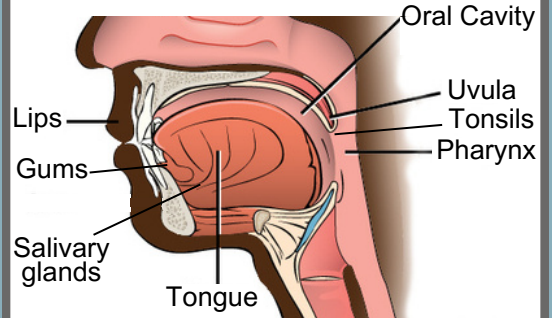


Image adapted from OpenStax Biology [openstax.org/books/biology-2e/pages/34-1-digestive-systems](https://openstax.org/books/biology-2e/pages/34-1-digestive-systems)

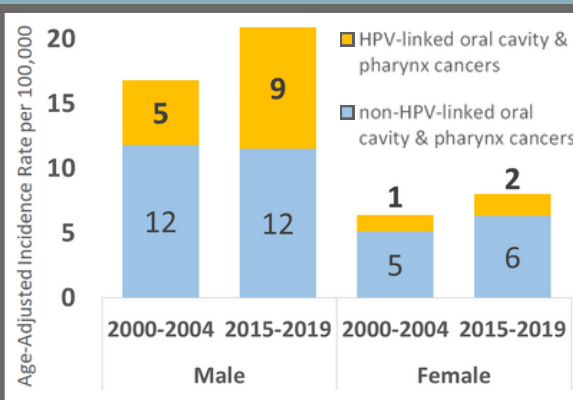
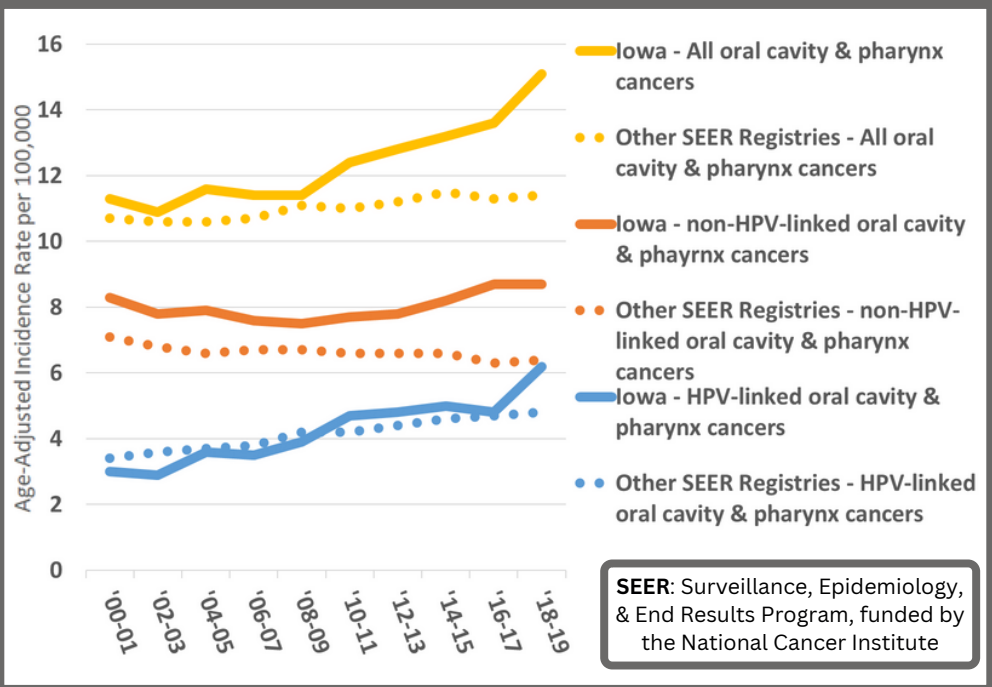
## Why are these cancer rates so high in Iowa?

### HPV & Other Risk Factors

- Oral cavity and pharynx cancers can be divided into **human papillomavirus (HPV)-linked** and **non-HPV-linked** cancer types.
- Non-HPV-linked cancers may still be caused by other risk factors, like **tobacco** and **alcohol use**.

Both types of oral cavity & pharynx cancer are **rising in Iowa**, especially compared to other SEER registries.

In Iowa, oral cavity & pharynx cancer is **more common among males**, and there has been an **overall increase in HPV-linked cancers** over time.







### Multiple risk factors can increase cancer rates

Cancer is complex, and can be caused by **genetic, lifestyle, and environmental** factors. Cancer can take decades to develop. **What you do today can prevent cancer in the long-run.**

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## What does this mean for me?

### Risk Factors for Oral Cavity & Pharynx Cancer

- **Tobacco use** (e.g., cigarettes, chewing tobacco, betel quid) 
- **Alcohol consumption**
- **Human papillomavirus (HPV)**
- Unhealthy diet 
- Lack of exercise 
- Ultraviolet (UV) light exposure (for lip cancer)
- Oral leukoplakia (white patches inside the mouth) 

In 2021, Iowa males had **higher rates of alcohol and tobacco use** than females, along with **lower rates of HPV vaccination.**

### Ways to Prevent These Cancers

- **Avoid tobacco products**
- **Limit alcohol use**
- **Get the HPV vaccine** 
- Consume a healthy diet 
- Be physically active
- Use sun protection
- Avoid tanning beds and excess sun

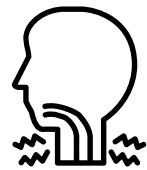
### Early Detection

Regular dental checkups can help screen for early signs of oral cavity & pharynx cancer.



### Symptoms

- Unusual mouth bleeding
- Mouth pain
- Neck mass
- Sore throat
- Trouble chewing or swallowing food



## Want to learn more?

### Additional Resources

#### Head and Neck Cancers Fact Sheet

[cancer.gov/types/head-and-neck/head-neck-fact-sheet](https://cancer.gov/types/head-and-neck/head-neck-fact-sheet)

#### Cancer Stat Facts: Oral Cavity & Pharynx Cancer

[seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/oralcav.html](https://seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/oralcav.html)

#### HPV Cancer Survivor Stories - Jon

[youtube.com/watch?v=UskiETAMfXM](https://youtube.com/watch?v=UskiETAMfXM)

#### Tobacco Quitline

1-800-QUIT-NOW | [quitlineiowa.org](https://quitlineiowa.org)

### References

1. **State Cancer Profiles.** [statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov](https://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov)
2. **Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program.** [seer.cancer.gov](https://seer.cancer.gov)
3. **Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).** [cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/](https://cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/)
4. **TeenVaxView.** [cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-managers/coverage/teenvaxview/data-reports/index.html](https://cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-managers/coverage/teenvaxview/data-reports/index.html)
5. **"Head and Neck Cancers."** CDC. [cdc.gov/cancer/headneck/index.htm](https://cdc.gov/cancer/headneck/index.htm)
6. **"Financial Burden of Cancer Care"** [progressreport.cancer.gov/after/economic\\_burden](https://progressreport.cancer.gov/after/economic_burden)
7. **"Head and Neck Cancers"** [cancer.gov/types/head-and-neck/head-neck-fact-sheet](https://cancer.gov/types/head-and-neck/head-neck-fact-sheet)

### Read the full 2023 Cancer in Iowa Report:



[shri.public-health.uiowa.edu/cancer-data/iowa-cancer-reports](https://shri.public-health.uiowa.edu/cancer-data/iowa-cancer-reports)