Oral Cancer Screening

Approximately 30,000 new cases of oral cancer and 7,500 deaths due to oral cancer will occur this year. According to the American Cancer society, the most common reason for this high death rate is that lesions are found too late. Unfortunately, even the five year survival rate remains low.

It is common for women to have annual pap smears or mammograms and for men to have prostate exams. These exams have been made possible because of public awareness that catching cancers in the earliest form means a greater survival rate. Oral cancer is no different.

Our office is making it a mission to increase your awareness of oral cancer and to find oral cancer in its earliest stages. As of May 1, 2007 we will be adding and additional exam to our protocol. In addition to checking the back of your throat, your gum tissues, feeling under your tongue and making you stick it out at me, we will also be checking for abnormal tissues with the VELSCOPE.

The VELSCOPE is a non-invasive, painless procedure. It uses a safe, high energy light and specialized filter technology to look for any abnormal tissues in the earliest stages. This exam will be completed once a year for anyone 18 and older. It will also be submitted to your insurance company for payment but at this time some carriers are not covering it. I think this is a small price to pay if it ends up saving your life.