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## **“VELscope Mucosal Screening” Something Special for Oral Cancer Prevention for our Patients at Summit Dental Arts!**

As you know, we perform an intra and extra oral soft and hard tissue exam using our eyes, fingers, dental mirror, explorer and the operatory light (visible light) each time you visit the hygienist. While the examination of your teeth is important, we believe it is even more important that we look carefully at your soft tissue because detecting abnormal spots early on can save your life. That’s why we pull on your tongue!

Tissue abnormalities usually start as something called mild dysplasia. These areas then can advance through a moderate to a severe stage on their way to becoming a carcinoma. The goal of our regular soft tissue exam is to find these areas while they are in the early stages and remove them well before they become a carcinoma.

Unfortunately, one of the reasons that oral cancer rates have not gone down in the last 30 years is that the early stages of the disease process are very difficult or impossible to detect using just visible light, even with magnification. We are finding cancer with our eyes and visible light, but not enough of the earlier precursors to lower the overall incidence of oral cancer.

This can now change. Recently, a new FDA approved technology has become available that uses a blue light source and special filters that allow us to see areas of concern well before they become apparent to us if we used only visible light.

This new device is called the VELscope. We are now including at no extra fee a VELscope exam along with our regular oral cancer-screening exam to all of our patients over 21 and we recommend it for patients of any age if you are a smoker.

In the past, it was thought that men over 40 who smoke and drink alcohol were the group most likely to get oral cancer, but the newest research shows that more women and non-smokers are developing oral cancer at younger ages than ever before. Research as to why includes investigations into links to Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), plus other environmental risk factors. However, there are no answers yet. So the best advice we have is to stop smoking, moderate your alcohol consumption and have regular screening exams.

This painless, non-invasive VELscope exam gives us a better chance to find any oral abnormalities you may have at the earliest possible stage. We would be glad to discuss the research and provide a more detailed description of the device and how it works or you can check it out at [www.velscope.com](http://www.velscope.com).

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Everyone at Summit Dental Arts, P.C.