



Mouth Cancer
FOUNDATION
www.mouthcancerfoundation.org

MEDIA ALERT – A VISIT TO THE DENTIST COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE!

EMBARGO: 00:00 WEDNESDAY 9TH MARCH 2011

**INTERVIEWS AVAILABLE: FOUNDER OF THE MOUTH CANCER FOUNDATION –
DR VINOD JOSHI
MOUTH CANCER SURVIVOR - KEITH HERN**

To set up an interview please call Media Ambitions on 0208 940 2222.

***“Smoking and drinking remain high risk factors of mouth cancer. Give up
Smoking today!”***

Throat Cancer Survivor & Author – Keith Hern.

Today, the UK’s leading mouth cancer charity, the **Mouth Cancer Foundation** is urging everyone to have regular dental checks, especially if they smoke. There is a proven link between smoking and mouth cancer and dentists are more likely to detect the early symptoms of Mouth Cancer. Early detection can save lives.

*Eighty-five percent of head and neck cancers are linked to tobacco use. People who use both tobacco and alcohol are at greater risk for developing these cancers than people who use either tobacco or alcohol alone.

The founder of the **Mouth Cancer Foundation** Dr Joshi says “Research shows that 3 in 4 people who have mouth cancer have smoked at some point in their lives**. Most people are now aware that smoking carries serious health risks. Smoking drastically increases the risk of Mouth Cancer. It is a thoroughly debilitating disease. We are encouraging everyone to have regular checks at their Dentists as Dentists know the symptoms to look out for.”

Every year, nearly ***one million smokers quit on No Smoking Day. People who quit smoking and attend a mouth screening will be taking steps to drastically improve their health.

“I asked my surgeon what would have happened if I hadn't found the lump when I did. He said that in just months I would have ended up with a lump the size of a golf ball on my neck and I'd have been coughing up blood. Simply, I wouldn't have survived.”

Keith Hern.

Throat cancer survivor and ‘Bangers and Mash**** Author Keith Hern, 52, from Thames Ditton, Surrey, knows only too well the dangers of smoking. It was a normal Saturday in May 2007 when Keith

discovered a lump in his neck while at home with his wife Madeleine, 52, and their daughter Jessica, now 17. He was diagnosed with an aggressive form of throat Cancer - and he's since beaten it twice.

In his book, a photographic account of his own battle with throat cancer, Keith admitted to smoking and drinking too much. He says *"I drank a fair amount - probably about 50 units a week - and I also used to smoke about 25 cigarettes a day, until I gave up 12 years ago. I ate a lot of red meat and dairy products and consumed too much sugar and coffee - a poor diet, smoking and high alcohol consumption are linked to head and neck cancers."*

Keith needed two operations, one to remove a primary tumour on the back of his tongue and another to remove a secondary tumour, which was a lump in his neck. He then underwent months of invasive chemotherapy and radiotherapy, which left him physically and emotionally drained.

In November 2009, Keith was dealt a bitter blow when a routine two-year check-up revealed the cancer had returned. This time it was in Keith's chest. Again Keith underwent treatment, involving cycles of chemotherapy and radiotherapy. He did not have any operations, as the chest area was too hard to access. Keith finished his treatment in May 2010 and, in June, was told the amazing news that the cancer had gone.

Dr Joshi continues *"If all smokers could see the nightmare Keith and many of my patients live with every day I'm sure they would give up smoking immediately. This is a good day to STOP! Keith's story also highlights the importance of oral cancer screening which can detect early signs of lumps and abnormalities in the head and neck area."*

For more information visit the **Mouth Cancer Foundation** at www.mouthcancerfoundation.org.

-ENDS-

For general press enquiries, please contact:

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NOTES TO EDITORS

*Ref: <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Sites-Types/head-and-neck>

**Ref: <http://www.cancerhelp.org.uk/about-cancer/cancer-questions/mouth-cancer-how-to-reduce-your-risk#cause>

***Nosmokingday.org.uk

The Mouth Cancer Foundation – www.mouthcancerfoundation.org

The Mouth Cancer Foundation is a registered charity no. 1109298.

In the UK, nearly 8000 people are diagnosed with Mouth Cancer every year. Cancers can occur in any part of the mouth, tongue, lips, and adjacent areas like the throat, salivary glands, pharynx, larynx, sinus, and other sites in the head and neck area. In its very early stages, these Mouth Cancers can be easy to ignore.

Symptoms include:

1. An ulcer or white or red patch anywhere in the mouth that does not heal within 3 weeks
2. A lump or swelling anywhere in the mouth, jaw or neck that persists for more than 3 weeks

3. A difficulty in swallowing, chewing or moving the jaw or tongue
5. A numbness of the tongue or other area of the mouth
6. A feeling that something is caught in the throat
7. A chronic sore throat or hoarseness that persists more than 6 weeks
8. An unexplained loosening of teeth with no dental cause

More information about Mouth Cancer is available at the Mouth Cancer Foundation web site www.mouthcancerfoundation.org or by emailing info@mouthcancerfoundation.org

****Bangers & Mash, by Keith Hern (MX Publishing, £9.99) is his written and photographic account of his ordeal. It is available from www.throatcancersurvivor.co.uk or amazon.co.uk.