Hello, and welcome to a very special edition of Word of Mouth.

Not only is it one year to the very day that the magazine launched, but it’s also the start of our Mouth Cancer Action Month campaign. Each and every year we come to you and report on a rise in mouth cancer cases. It is with regret that this trend is continuing. There have been almost 7,700 new incidences of mouth cancer in the UK over the last year – a figure which has increased by more than 50% in the last decade. Experts believe these figures are set to rise even further, and the fact remains that collectively we need to take action to reduce growing incidence and mortality rates. Even with vast advances in technology, without early detection, half will not survive. That’s why we are once again encouraging you, the profession, to talk about mouth cancer with your patients, educate them about the disease, and continue to examine them during their check-ups – it’s the only way we can catch the disease early and transform survival rates.

The groups of people at risk of mouth cancer are more diverse than they have ever been. Mouth cancer has traditionally been a risk for older people and tobacco and alcohol users but new research shows a younger population increasingly at risk and a rising threat of cancer transmitted by oral sex, through the human papillomavirus (HPV).

Finally, I would like to thank our campaign sponsors Denplan, along with support from Dentists’ Provident and the Association of Dental Groups (ADG). Without their tremendous and generous support much of what we do could simply not be possible.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Word of Mouth, and all the best for Mouth Cancer Action Month!
CHARITIES CALL FOR MOUTH CANCER ACTION

The UK’s leading independent oral health charity is today announcing the launch of the Mouth Cancer Action Month campaign, dedicated to raising awareness of the killer disease.

Taking place throughout November, organisers, the British Dental Health Foundation are also delighted to announce that the Mouth Cancer Foundation will be supporting this year’s campaign by raising awareness of the disease throughout the month.

Sponsored by Denplan and also supported by Dentists’ Provident and the Association of Dental Groups (ADG), The Foundation will be calling on dentists, doctors and pharmacists to educate members of the general public about a disease that kills more people in the UK than testicular and cervical cancer combined, under the tagline ‘If in doubt, get checked out’.

Latest figures show almost 7,700 new cases a year are diagnosed in the UK, with one person dying every five hours from the disease. As a result, action really must be taken to raise awareness and change these figures. Chief Executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter OBE, highlights the importance of early detection in the battle against the disease.

Dr Carter says: “If the profession can inform and urge patients that regularly attending check-ups increases the chances of mouth cancer being detected at an early stage, together we can help to raise awareness of this killer disease.

“Almost nine in ten people survive mouth cancer if it is caught early, yet the five year survival rate remains as low as 50 per cent. Encouraging patients to perform self-diagnosis such as looking for ulcers that do not heal within three weeks, red or white patches in the mouth and any unusual lumps or swelling can also help towards early detection.”

Roger Matthews, Denplan’s Chief Dental Officer said: “Denplan is extremely proud to be working so closely with the Foundation once again on Mouth Cancer Action Month, which we have supported for many years. Oral health and the prevention of disease is at the heart of everything we do at Denplan and we will be encouraging all our member dentists to offer free oral health screenings as part of their activity – particularly our Excel accredited dentists, who have access to our unique risk assessment software, endorsed by the Foundation. Together with the other organisations involved, we can help to raise awareness and ultimately save lives.”

Founder of the Mouth Cancer Foundation, Dr Vinod Joshi, praised the partnership, saying: “The two charities share the common objective of raising awareness about mouth cancer and it makes total sense for us to join forces to make this November’s Mouth Cancer Action Month a resounding success.”

HPV - A ‘CONCERN’ FOR LEADING PROFESSOR

The growing burden of the human papillomavirus (HPV) on public health, along with its unethical vaccination programme is ‘immensely alarming’, according to Professor Margaret Stanley.

Speaking at the House of Commons, Professor Margaret Stanley OBE, from the Department of Pathology at the University of Cambridge, addressed the concerning escalation of HPV in men, and called for an immediate re-examination of the current vaccination programme.

Experts have forecast that the human papillomavirus (HPV), often transmitted via oral sex, will overtake tobacco use as the main risk factor for mouth cancer within the next decade.

A vaccination programme for girls aged 12 to 13 has been in place in the UK since 2008, but speaking at the Parliamentary Reception for November’s Mouth Cancer Action Month campaign, Professor Stanley says it is time for a change.

Professor Stanley agreed to be this year’s keynote speaker. Her knowledge of HPV is unrivalled and certainly provided an excellent insight into the disease.

“I was delighted Professor Stanley agreed to be this year’s keynote speaker. Her knowledge of HPV is unrivalled and certainly provided an excellent insight into the disease.”

“HPV is expected to overtake tobacco use as the leading cause of mouth cancer within the next decade, which is why collectively we need to educate the public about the risk factors and signs and symptoms throughout the month.”
IT WAS JUST MEANT TO BE: RACHEL’S STORY

Many people believe in fate or destiny. Few can offer a reason for doing so without retorting ‘just because I do’. For 42-year-old mother of five Rachel Parsons from Coventry, the answer is much more sincere.

“Since I was diagnosed with mouth cancer, we have developed a bit of a family motto” Rachel said. “Everything happens for a reason, and that reason isn’t clear until something happens. I know I got mouth cancer to help other people get through their own battle. I just know it.”

On Boxing Day 2007 Rachel first noticed a lump in her mouth. Having heard of mouth cancer and the symptoms, she knew she needed to get checked out. After the dentist told her it was Lichen Planus, a long lasting disease that can be found in the mouth, during a check-up in February the following year, Rachel’s mouth got progressively worse.

“I had a number of recurring ulcers and the lump had got worse, yet at my six month check-up in June, my dentist insisted it was nothing for me to worry about. I asked specifically for a hospital referral, and reluctantly he agreed.

“Not long after that check-up my mum was reading an article in a magazine about mouth cancer. She pleaded with me to go back to the doctors, as I hadn’t heard anything from the dentist. I went the following Monday, and it soon became obvious my dentist hadn’t referred me at all.

“My doctor instantly referred me for an urgent biopsy the following Thursday. I remember being sat at home the night before I got my results thinking ‘I’ve got cancer’. In my head I saw what was going to happen, where I was going to sit, what the consultant would say to me, everything. My eldest asked me why I would be up early, and I replied because I might have cancer. Sure enough the next day was a massive de ja vu. I had cancer.”

Rachel told of her relief at finally knowing what the problem was. Although the road ahead would prove a difficult one for her, husband Tim also felt the ripple effect of Rachel’s diagnosis. Like a cancer spreading throughout the body, her family suffered too.

Tim said: “I’m a fireman. My job is about saving lives and being there when people need me. When it came to Rachel, I felt totally powerless. It was really, really tough. Rachel and I had a discussion and we decided it would be best for me to carry on as normal. After all, I had five children and a wife to support. The problem with that was it wasn’t a normal situation, and the stress it puts on the family is immeasurable.

“As the surgeon had told Rachel what would happen during surgery, one thing we decided to do to take the pressure off our young family was to associate the scars with animals. One would be from a shark bite and one would be from a bear attack. It was just a small thing, but it made a huge difference to the way the children saw their mum.”

After 9 ½ hours in surgery, Tim was at Rachel’s side during her recovery in hospital. She recalls one particular moment that brought further relief to a tense situation. “Tim asked me to check a mirror to see what I looked like” she said. “I couldn’t believe how insensitive he was being, but he was insistent on me looking in the mirror to see how I looked post-surgery.

“The next thing I knew Tim unveiled this mirror with a picture of Kylie Minogue on it and said Mr Walton’s good isn’t he, Mr Walton being my surgeon. Tim had done exactly the same with my bathroom mirror too. Needless to say it was completely unexpected, and given as Kylie has always been my idol, it was a wonderful touch. It was a little reminder of why I was going to get through this.”

Rachel’s first year of recovery was fraught with complications and continuous infections. She recalled how surgeons kept removing further bits of her mouth, yet her determination to pull through was evident to husband Tim.

“Life has never been the same” he said. “It has definitely changed our outlook on life. The whole experience has made Rachel a better, stronger person.”

Rachel herself added: “The big thing about mouth cancer is the awareness. I have been very proactive and helped other people who were in my position. The most important thing is for people to remember if there’s something not quite right or something they’re a little bit unsure about, go and get checked out. It saved my life, and it could save yours too.”
HOW YOU CAN HELP TO SAVE LIVES WITH MOUTH CANCER SCREENINGS

Nearly 60 per cent of patients still don't know that their dentist can check them for mouth cancer at their dental examination. Denplan, the main sponsor of Mouth Cancer Action Month, continues to rally for free screenings in the dental practice to raise awareness of this killer disease.

"Mouth Cancer Action Month is a great way to help people understand the importance of seeing their dental team, both for their oral health in general, but also if they think they've got any symptoms of the disease. The lack of awareness of mouth cancer is one problem, but another is encouraging people to use their dental team to get checked," says Denplan's Deputy Chief Dental Officer, Dr. Henry Clover.

Denplan addresses this second point by supporting its 6,500 member dentists and their teams in offering free mouth cancer screenings for patients.

"We were among the first to promote this initiative to our members and the excellent news is that many other dentists have since followed," says Dr. Clover.

Today a huge number of Denplan dentists across the UK give patients free mouth cancer screenings during the campaign month of November, or hold dedicated open days and events to check patients for signs of the disease.

"As dentists and practice team members, we are in the ideal position to share information, highlight risks and spot mouth cancer signs, which can be vital when ensuring that a patient receives treatment in time," says Dr. Clover.

Knowledge of dental examination is low

More than half of the population received a dental consultation in the last two years. Yet, our survey shows that besides people not knowing that their dentist can check them for mouth cancer, they also don't know what is screened to detect signs of mouth cancer.

Less than five per cent of people know that their tongue, cheeks, back of the throat or roof/floor of the mouth is checked by their dentist when screened for mouth cancer, and less than one per cent of people think their jaw and neck is checked. Only 10 per cent think their dentist checks them for unusual lumps, when screening them for mouth cancer.

On-going awareness raising

This year, Denplan also launched the Denplan Excel PreViser Patient Assessment – an online risk assessment tool which provides patients with an instant evidence based oral health report including the risk of future disease. Part of this report is dedicated to the risk of mouth cancer.

"It's a great way to raise awareness with patients about their oral health and a good opportunity for dentists and practice team members to discuss mouth cancer signs and risks, as a regular part of dental examinations," says Dr. Clover.

"As you know, mouth cancer screenings aren't just for November, but this campaign is a great way to raise the topic with patients, so that as a profession we can help raise awareness of the disease and can together save more lives," he concludes.

Find out more

If you are a dentist or patient interested in finding out more about mouth cancer symptoms or how to organise a screening, we recommend you visit the British Dental Health Foundation’s campaign website, www.mouthcancer.org.

Here you can also register your practice if you’re planning to hold free screenings during November. Patients will also be directed there during November’s campaign to look up a screening near them.

Top 5 ways to drive most patients into your practice to receive a free screening:

1. Put up posters in your window and/or on an A-board outside your practice.
2. Team up with local leisure clubs to visit their foyer for a few hours and sign people up for free screenings.
3. Arrange an open day, with practice fundraising activities, such as raffles or children’s competitions – remember to have blue ribbons on sale!
4. Send a press release about your efforts in the campaign to get more publicity and raise further awareness of the issue and your practice. If you’ve helped refer a patient in the past, the media will be very interested in a case study, provided the patient is happy to help.
5. Advertise in the local paper or radio – and make sure you register what your practice is doing during the campaign at www.mouthcancer.org.

Source:

1. British Dental Health Foundation, Mouth Cancer Action Month Survey, September 2013, conducted by OnePoll.
Due to the very nature of mouth cancer, it can often be difficult discussing the disease with patients. During Mouth Cancer Action Month, there’s an opportunity for every dental and health professional to speak out.

Whether it’s talking about the risk factors, educating members of the public about the disease or someone looking to find out more about the campaign, supporting mouth cancer awareness by wearing a Blue Ribbon Badge has never been more important. This year campaign organisers the British Dental Health Foundation are urging all staff at dental practices, dental companies, hospitals and pharmacies to wear a Blue Ribbon Badge and support mouth cancer awareness as a team.

For every £1 donated to the campaign, we will send you a Blue Ribbon Badge to wear, not just throughout the campaign, but all year round. Thanks to your support 100,000 Blue Ribbon Appeal Badges have been distributed in the past three years, raising funds to set up and maintain Mouth Cancer Action Month, create hundreds of media stories raising the awareness of mouth cancer and lobby Government on anti-smoking legislation and oral screening programmes.

If you’d like to show your support as a team, you can also register your details for a Blue Ribbon Appeal Kit at the campaign website. Our Blue Ribbon Appeal Kit contains 25 badges, a collection box, the A3 campaign poster and details of how to donate. Display the box on your reception desk and use it to engage patients and discuss mouth cancer, and remember to ask your boss for permission first.

Chief Executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter OBE, said: “They might help to start a conversation out of the blue, but the Blue Ribbon Appeal continues to play a key role in directly engaging the public with the issues surrounding mouth cancer. Every little bit counts, and it all makes a difference in improving education and ultimately saving lives.

“The profession remains at the forefront of the battle to reduce and catch mouth cancer cases early. Whether you show your support as an individual or an organisation, together we can reverse the growing number of cases we are witnessing.”

To donate £1 to the campaign and get a Blue Ribbon Badge please visit our JustGiving page at www.justgiving.com/Blue-Ribbon-Appeal-Badges.

To claim your Blue Ribbon Appeal Kit, please visit www.mouthcancer.org/page/blue-ribbon-appeal

Statistics released by the Department of Health reveal costly delays that could jeopardise the lives of suspected head and neck cancer patients.

According to the 2012/13 Cancer Waiting Times annual report¹, 1,252 suspected head and neck cancer patients had to wait longer than three weeks to be seen by a specialist, a delay that could potentially cost lives.

With mouth cancer cases on the increase, campaigners the British Dental Health Foundation are calling for suspected head and neck cancer patients to be seen within two-week referral target due to the very nature of the disease. Without early detection, the five year survival rate for mouth cancer is only 50 per cent. If it is caught early, survival rates over five years can dramatically improve to up to 90 per cent.

Between April 2012 and March 2013 over one million patients were seen by cancer specialists following an urgent referral. A total of 96.1 per cent of suspected head and neck cancer were seen within 14 days of referral, compared to 96.3 per cent in 2010-2011². More than 50,000 patients were not seen within 14 days of referral.

Cancer waiting times are monitored carefully by the Foundation, which organises the Mouth Cancer Action Month campaign, to help raise awareness of the disease and its symptoms.

Chief Executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter OBE, said: “The challenge in relation to mouth cancer is to ensure that, due to the very nature of the disease, patients are seen quickly. Most people with mouth cancer present late as stage 4 – the most advanced stage where time is of the essence in potentially saving a life.

“It is pleasing to see such a high percentage of suspected cancer patients seen within two weeks, but mouth cancer patients in particular should not have to wait more than three weeks.

“More people died from mouth cancer in 2010 than from cervical and testicular cancer combined. Early detection saves lives, so be aware that ulcers which do not heal within three weeks, red and white patches in the mouth and unusual lumps or swellings in the mouth are early warning signs of mouth cancer.

“Our message to everyone is simple – ‘If in doubt, get checked out.’”

**SOURCES**

ORAL CANCER: MY PERSPECTIVE

As a PhD student researching cancer, I have heard time and time again the latest cancer statistics and the latest idea of how to 'beat' cancer. However, it never crossed my mind that I, a healthy and happy 25 year old, would be diagnosed with oral cancer.

Cancer is never far from the headlines and every patient has their own story to tell, but I hope in writing this to share my personal experience from the rare position of a young patient and a scientist. That in the future, the causes of oral cancer in young people will be thoroughly researched to improve diagnosis and treatment, and that society will become more aware of the disease.

As a normal student in my twenties, I was busy living life to the full, juggling my time between family, friends, work and other interests. About the time I first felt pain in my mouth, my fiancé and I were busy planning our wedding. I found some ulcers under my tongue and tried various off-the-shelf products, which had little effect. It did not even cross my mind that it could be anything serious. I went to see a GP about it a couple of months later, and was prescribed another anti-inflammatory drug.

In the week leading up to our wedding we had a family tragedy, so I returned to see my GP only after our honeymoon. I felt exhausted, run down and had persistent ulcers and mouth pain. I was convinced that my stressful life was causing the symptoms. My GP looked at my mouth over this period, thought the ulcers were clearing up and agreed they were likely to be a sign of stress. Gradually my mouth became more painful, my speech slurred, eating difficult and sleep sparse. I struggled with normal life. My husband and friends were increasingly concerned and encouraged me to keep going back to the GP, who a few weeks later referred me to the dental hospital, but informed me that I would not be seen quickly as I was young, healthy and had never smoked.

After a short hospital stay, biopsies and scans revealed a tumour in the base of my mouth and tongue. It's hard to imagine how you will cope with the diagnosis of the big 'C'. 'Cancer' has become a familiar word to us all, but its meaning is highly personal. In the past, the word reminded me of my work as a scientist, seeking to help patients and improve treatments by having a better understanding of the disease. But that was the past. Facing diagnosis was different: I felt a mixture of terror at what the future might hold, and a strange sense of relief that I knew what was wrong with me.

I had a month to wait for the surgery. It was the first time I had ever been told to eat lots and rest as much as possible, but I didn't want to do either. I had no appetite and wanted to keep myself distracted. Living in Glasgow, my husband and I were a long way from our families in the South of England, which was difficult for all of us. Cancer affects close family and friends, not just the patient. But they were incredibly supportive and helpful. We had to ask people to stop making soup for us, as our fridge and freezer were overflowing!

I had to trust that my doctors knew what they were doing, as my life was literally in their hands. The operation was almost 12 hours long. The tumour was removed along with most of the floor of my mouth, half my tongue, some teeth and a small shaving of jawbone. But it took another operation, in which the surgeons de-bulked my new tongue and floor of my mouth (reducing their size), before I felt any big improvement in speech or eating. This was followed by another minor operation to further de-bulk my tongue and implant new teeth.

The main thing that struck me was how weak and exhausted I was. I thought I'd feel better a lot quicker than I did, which was incredibly frustrating. Whenever I felt improvement, I would return to the hospital for another operation, and would feel worse again. Surprisingly, I spotted a work colleague at the hospital, and discovered that she also had oral cancer. I could not believe it: the first patient I'd met who was roughly my age, I knew!

When I felt ready for work, I spoke to a kind woman from Macmillan, who advised me on returning to my studies. I still felt exhausted, with the added difficulty of hearing, reading and thinking about cancer research. Despite great support from my colleagues, I found this really tough and ended up having a false start.

It has been almost two years since my diagnosis, and only now am I nearly recovered. This is just my personal experience of cancer. Many will have different stories to tell, and some are not as fortunate as I have been. This is why I am keen to increase cancer awareness, improve training for dentists and GPs, improve support for other patients and raise money to fund research into oral cancer.

I want people to know that oral cancer can occur with no predisposing risk factors. Currently I am volunteering for The Ben Walton Trust, a charity that focuses on promoting awareness and funds research into oral cancer in younger patients (www.benwaltontrust.org). I am organising a fund raising event during Mouth Cancer Action Month to support the work of the Ben Walton Trust. If you would like to support this work, you can donate £5 by texting ‘EMCH99 £5’ to 70070.
ADG LAUNCHES FREE CPD MODULE FOR DENTAL HEALTH TEAMS

Written by David Worskett, Chair of the Association of Dental Groups

With 7,698 new cases of mouth cancer annually and death rates remaining consistently high, we are proud that the Association of Dental Groups (ADG), which represents UK corporate dental groups, is able to support the British Dental Health Foundation during Mouth Cancer Action Month.

Mouth Cancer Action Month is different to most other cancer awareness campaigns, in that it is not just about educating the public about mouth cancer: it is also about increasing knowledge within clinical professions. This is particularly important as we know from discussions amongst our members and external surveys of healthcare professionals, that many feel they need more training on mouth cancer identification and treatment.

Mouth cancer rates are on the rise and we know that early detection is key to increasing survival. Ensuring dental health specialists are fully equipped to be able to spot the signs of the disease is therefore critical. But all too often, patients aren’t getting picked up as early as they should for a whole host of reasons, including the nature of the disease itself.

The ADG is in a unique position in that our members represent approximately 10% of the country’s dental surgeries and employ approximately 3,500 dentists. We therefore conclude that the best way for us to support the campaign would be by improving education amongst the profession about the disease and the treatment processes.

To make this into a reality, in conjunction with the British Dental Health Foundation, the ADG has developed a CPD module, created at the IDH Manchester Academy, focused on the early detection and treatment of the disease. This new module will be available to all dental health professionals in the UK and we hope it will be a powerful new tool for increasing knowledge, raising awareness and, most importantly, improving outcomes for patients.

We are particularly pleased that the ADG module will be available free to all dentists and oral health professionals in the UK regardless of whom they work for. Dentists who also wish to apply for a CPD certificate, upon successful completion of the two hour long module, can do so for just £25 +VAT, £5 of which will be donated to the British Dental Health Foundation and the Mouth Cancer Action Month campaign.

In the past there has been no compulsory CPD module for mouth cancer identification. Recently, the General Dental Council (GDC) have recommended that oral cancer – early detection, is included within the 5 year CPD cycle and we very much hope this module will make it easier to implement that recommendation.

The module itself gives dental health professionals a detailed and interactive overview of how to spot cancers, and the treatment process involved. There are four videos including interviews with Dr Nigel Carter and Professor StJohn Crean, Dean of the School of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Central Lancashire. There is also an interview with a patient and a detailed example of a mouth cancer screening.

By the end of the module, dental health professionals should be able to describe oral cancer epidemiology; outline the importance of routine screening; understand how to carry out a screening programme and keeping accurate records; understand the different types of oral cancer and be able to describe the appropriate referral procedure.

Dentists working in ADG member companies have said this is the most comprehensive and interactive online module they had seen and will raise awareness amongst the whole dental team, giving them the ability to spot and treat cancer more effectively.

A further tragedy of this disease is that sometimes, the most obvious warning signs are only noticeable to a patient once the cancer has progressed. This means that it is even more important that dental health professionals are fully trained to be able to spot the early warning signs. Currently there is nothing like this module available for UK dentists and we hope it will make a big difference to patients. We urge all dental professionals to view the module and put the knowledge to good use.

- The full module is available on the ADG’s website at http://www.dentalgroups.co.uk/.
THINKING ABOUT THE UNTHINKABLE

Written by Sarah Bradbury, Head of Marketing and Communications, Dentists’ Provident

If you are unable to work because you suffer from an illness, disease or have an accident, it is important that you ensure your income is covered to protect your lifestyle and your family.

Throughout your life, your expenses tend to increase; perhaps from taking on a bigger mortgage or funding your children’s education. So it becomes increasingly important to make sure that in the event of your ill health your monthly outgoings can still be paid.

Dentists’ Provident’s claim statistics show that during 2012 some 14% of male and 6% of female claims paid were for accidents and it only takes a slip on the ice or falling off your bike on a family outing for you to take time off work while you wait for your injuries to heal. But it is also important to protect yourself for potentially longer term absences from work such as if you are diagnosed with cancer. In the same year 19% of female and 6% of male claims paid were for cancer with one female dentist being paid benefits of over £50,000 over 11 months, while she recovered from cancer.

Physical profession
Not only do you need to cover yourself for accidents or longer term illnesses that may prevent you from practising and therefore earning, but the injuries that you can suffer every day in your practising life. Because dentistry is such a physical profession, requiring flexible hands and fingers, good eyesight and the ability to move freely, it only takes a relatively minor injury to prevent you from doing your job. Add to that the risk of stress-related illnesses, back, or neck problems and it’s clear that any dental practitioner is exposed to the risk of illness or injury, at any age. Dentists’ Provident is currently paying long term benefits to around 150 of its 13,500 members, some of whom are only in their thirties.

“The truth of the matter is that dentists often spend more time worrying about their patients’ health than their own,” suggests Independent Financial Adviser Martin Haines from Dental Financial Associates. “Many work too many hours chair-side, often in less than ideal conditions and all whilst running a business at the same time as providing clinical care. It means that by the time they are in their forties, a number of dentists we see are already starting to show signs of ill health, and often it is this that has prompted them to find out what their options are but by this time it’s often too late to obtain the right cover on the right terms.”

Without some form of income protection to support you when you need it, the impact of being unable to work, whether for a couple of weeks, several months or much longer, can be devastating, particularly if you have dependants.

Greatest asset

“Any time can be a good time to start protecting what is important to you, but catching up later in life, particularly if health problems have already begun to take hold, may result in special terms,” says David Jones, Head of Member Services at Dentists’ Provident. “We find many of our members don’t review their income protection as often as they need to ensure it is appropriate for their current life stage,” he continues. “Our flexible plan means you can tailor it to your career and life stage and this should be taken greater advantage of.”

So what kind of cover do you need and where do you begin to look for it? “Your greatest asset is almost always your yet-to-be-earned income,” says Martin. “For some this could be in excess of £100,000 per year for twenty or thirty years. It’s a very large sum to leave unprotected, so it’s important to get it right.”

A quick search on the internet will reveal that there are plenty of insurers offering income protection policies. Unsurprisingly, however, the devil’s in the detail and when you’re time poor it can be a daunting prospect to sift through all the options. You might like to take professional advice to help you make an informed choice and to highlight the areas that might be most important for your particular circumstances.

Sue Delahunty, an Independent Financial Adviser from Wealthmasters for dentists, has observed numerous claims made by dentists over the years and knows how important it is to be able to trust the provider to offer a good claims service when things go wrong. “Empathy, understanding and above all efficiency in managing your claim are what make some providers stand out from the rest.” She explains “of course it’s only when you actually have reason to claim that you find out whether your choice of policy was the right one, but opting for a policy on price alone will rarely reward you in the long term. Unlike home and car insurance, for which you can change provider every year to make sure you’re getting the lowest price, income protection is a long term plan, so it’s vital to understand the details of the policy and choose the right provider who offers you value from the start.”

Types of provider

There are several different types of provider, from high street insurers and banks that offer cover to a wide range of professions, to friendly societies and other mutuals whose policies are generally more specialised. With some contracts, having a long term savings element to your plan can also deliver an attractive lump sum on retirement.

For dentists, certain elements of income protection insurance have more significance than for other professions, such as having the opportunity to receive benefits from the first day of sickness, so it could be sensible to consult those with particular experience of this sector.

Your health, your business and your family are obviously all very important to you so, if you don’t have cover or haven’t reviewed the protection you have in place, now could be the ideal time to take professional advice.

For further information please contact Sarah Bradbury; Head of Marketing and Communications on +44 20 7400 5716 (We may monitor calls to improve our service); Mobile: 07795 756613 or e-mail sarah.bradbury@dentistsprovident.co.uk; Dentists’ Provident, 91-94 Saffron Hill, London, EC1N 8QP
Register and receive your free campaign pack

Are you keen to take part in November’s Mouth Cancer Action Month or would just like to learn more about the campaign? It’s not too late to get involved to raise awareness of mouth cancer.

Simply register your details and find out more!

Please click the link below and fill out the registration form. We will then be able to send you your very own Mouth Cancer Action Month 2013 Campaign Pack.

Registration Form:

- Mouth Cancer Action Month Campaign Pack 2013

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED IN MOUTH CANCER ACTION MONTH

1 Posters and displays

One of the best and easiest ways to provide information to the public during the month is to set up a display. Use the campaign’s posters from your registration pack, alongside other educational resources available from the Foundation to put up in your reception or waiting room.

LINK: Try combining these with patient information leaflets and a Mouth Cancer Self-Examination Checklist, which can be found in our online shop.

2 Wear the blue ribbon

This year we are urging all staff at your dental practice, hospital or pharmacy to wear a Blue Ribbon Badge and support mouth cancer awareness as a team.

Simply head over to our JustGiving page and for every £1 you donate we will send you and your team one badge.

LINK: Go over to our Blue Ribbon Appeal page to learn more.

3 Get the Blue Ribbon Appeal Kit

So you and your team now have your very own Blue Ribbon Badges… what next?

Encourage your patients to wear one too! The Blue Ribbon Appeal continues to play a key role in directly engaging the public with the issues surrounding mouth cancer, whether it’s talking about the risk factors involved, the early warning signs or the benefits of early detection, can all make a difference in improving education and ultimately saving lives.

Our Blue Ribbon Appeal Kit contains 25 badges, a collection box, the A3 campaign poster and details of how to donate. Display the box on your reception desk and use it to engage patients and discuss mouth cancer.

LINK: For more information, and to order your Blue Ribbon Appeal Kit head over to our dedicated Blue Ribbon Appeal page.

4 Talk about mouth cancer alongside your visual examination

Offering patients or local groups an afternoon of free mouth cancer examinations is a great way to support your local community. It’s a good way to promote awareness of the illness, and at the same time help develop the goodwill of your practice.

Holding a special event to examine patients or local people within your community promotes early detection, as well as education, not just in the patient themselves but through word of mouth it will also improve awareness among their family and friends too. So whether it’s for the whole month, a week, a day, or one afternoon, your participation is crucial and can make a difference.
HELP US PROMOTE MOUTH CANCER

Every year our educational resources assist the profession in running events which will help promote awareness and action against mouth cancer. Our online shop at www.dentalhealth.org/shop is packed full of useful resources to promote better oral health.

CAMPAIGN PACK

Containing all the essential materials to promote Mouth Cancer Action Month 2013.

This pack includes:
- 6 Leaflet Samples
- 1 Campaign Bag
- 20 Balloons
- 75 Mouth Cancer Stickers
- 50 Infobites - Mouth Cancer Exam
- 50 Self Examination Checklists
- A Poster Pack
- 10 Pens
- 1 Blue Ribbon Badge
- 1 Toothbrush
- 1 Phone Charm
- 1 Key Ring
- 1 Bracelet

Price: £30.00

A BLUE BADGE

6 TOOTHBRUSHES

20 BALLOONS

10 PENS

A MUG

EXAMINATION POSTER

A5 size pad of 50 checklists to help patients become more informed and self aware.

MOUTH CANCER: INFOGRAPHIC

A6 postcard information card. Approved by the word centre, to help inform patients. Pack of 50.

SELF EXAMINATION CHECKLIST

A6 postcard information card. Approved by the word centre, to help inform patients.

MR GROSS MOUTH

The hinged model of the teeth, tongue and oral cavity shows the effects of tobacco.

SMOKING WALLCHART

Graphic poster highlighting the dangers of smoking and it’s effect on our body.

Buy all three for £15!!!

This great blue ribbon pack is only £10
Young, old, smokers and non-smokers, more than 6,500 people will be diagnosed with mouth cancer this year in the UK. Without early detection half will die.

Self-examination is a simple, potentially life-saving process. Look out for ulcers which do not heal within three weeks, red and white patches in the mouth, and unusual lumps or swellings.

Know the risk factors and regularly visit your dentist to ensure you are checked for signs of mouth cancer.

Visit www.mouthcancer.org