



dental health
services victoria
oral health for better health

Betel nut & oral cancer



What is betel nut?

Betel nut, also known as areca nut, is the seed of the fruit areca palm.

Chewing betel nut is a common cultural and social practice in Asia and the Pacific.

It is a highly addictive substance.



What are betel nut products?

Betel nut can be used alone or in a mixture of ingredients called 'betel quid', also known as 'Paan'.

Betel quid is made up of betel leaf, betel nut, and slaked lime, and it is commonly mixed with tobacco.

Betel nut products may be self-prepared with betel leaf and tobacco or commercially available in tins or sachets, which are known as paan masala/supari, gutka, bin lang, puwak, and buai/daka.



Frequent use of betel nuts and betel nut products over time increases the risk of oral cancer.

Signs & symptoms of oral cancer

Any of the following symptoms that continue for **more than three weeks**:

- A red, white, or black patch in the mouth.
- A lump in the mouth, neck, or face.
- An ulcer (a break on surface lining).
- Any abnormality that bleeds easily when touched.
- Pain or difficulty swallowing, speaking, chewing, or moving the jaw or tongue.
- Soreness in the throat or mouth.
- Numbness in the mouth or face.



How do I reduce my risk of oral cancer and improve my oral health?



Avoid using betel nuts and betel nut products



Avoid smoking, vaping and using tobacco products



Limit alcohol intake



Brush your teeth twice a day using a soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste, and floss your teeth daily



Get regular dental checks every 6 to 12 months

Who can I get help from?

Speak to your dental practitioner or doctor about any teeth and mouth problems.

They can:

- identify early signs of oral cancer
- help you establish an oral hygiene routine to take care of your teeth and mouth
- provide advice on risk factors and managing symptoms
- assist with referrals to specialists
- provide advice and support for quitting betel nut, tobacco and e-cigarette use (vaping).



Accessing dental care

- Visit your dental practitioner or contact your health fund for further information.
- Free public dental care is available for eligible people. Find a public dental clinic at: www.dhsv.org.au
- Find a private dental clinic at: www.ada.org.au/Find-a-Dentist
- Find a denture clinic at: www.adpa.com.au

Cancer information & support

Cancer Council

- Free and confidential
- Call 13 11 20
- Visit the website: cancer.org.au/support-and-services

Please scan the QR code to check your eligibility for free dental care or go to www.dhsv.org.au/our-services/are-you-eligible/eligibility-tool



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Oral Cancer
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