

# 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.
- Betel nut use can cause oral cancer.

## What are betel nut products?

Betel nut can be used alone or in a mixture of ingredients called 'betel quid'.

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

It may be self-prepared with the betel leaf or commercially available in tins or sachets, which are known as paan/supari, bin lang, puwak, and buai/daka.

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

- Stop the use of betel nut products.
- Do not smoke, vape, or use tobacco products, and 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.



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

## Signs & symptoms of oral cancer

- 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.
- Any of the above symptoms that continue for more than three weeks.



## 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 cancer.
- Help you establish an oral hygiene routine to take care of your teeth.
- Provide advice on risk factors and managing symptoms.
- Assist with referrals to specialists.



Early checks may produce better health outcomes.



## Accessing dental care

- Visit your dental practitioner or contact your health fund for further information.
- Find a private dentist at: [www.ada.org.au/Find-a-Dentist](http://www.ada.org.au/Find-a-Dentist).
- Free dental care is available in public dental clinics for eligible people.

## Cancer information & support

### Free & confidential

- Cancer Council
- Call 13 11 20
- Website [cancer.org.au/support-and-services](http://cancer.org.au/support-and-services)



Please scan the QR code to check your eligibility for free dental care or go to [health.nsw.gov.au/oralhealth/Pages/info-patients.aspx](http://health.nsw.gov.au/oralhealth/Pages/info-patients.aspx)



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