Part 4: Intra-Oral Exam Cheatsheet

Lesions that Might Signal Oral Cancer
- Leukoplakia (white lesions) - possible precursor to cancer
- Erythroplakia (red lesions) - greater potential for becoming cancerous than leukoplakia

Symptoms the Patient Might Report
- Soreness
- Lump or thickening
- Numbness
- Hoarseness
- Feeling as if something is caught in throat
- Difficulty chewing or swallowing
- Ear pain
- Difficulty moving jaw or tongue
- Jaw swelling that causes ill-fitting dentures

Oral cancer often has NO symptoms!!!

Palpate the lips with your thumbs and forefingers

Inspection of the Maxillary and Mandibular Buccal Mucosa
- Stretch right cheek up and away from maxillary teeth.
- Extend tissue so that no folds remain to conceal a lesion or abnormality.
- Be sure to do both the right and left sides of the mouth

Palpation of the Cheek:
- Left hand - middle and ring finger extraorally
- Right hand - index finger intraorally
- Compress tissue between your fingers.
- Palpate the entire length of the buccal mucosa.

Inspection of The Hard and Soft Palate
- Visual inspection of the hard and soft palate, uvula, tonsils, and oropharynx.
- With mirror reflecting surface down, ask patient to say "ahhhh."
- Apply firm downward and forward pressure with mirror.

Inspection of Tongue
- Grasp the tongue with damp gauze.
- Usually inspect the entire ventral surface.
**Inspection of the Lateral Borders**
- Gently pull tongue to the left commissure.
- Evert it to obtain a clear view of the lateral surface.
- Repeat to inspect the other side of tongue.

**Palpation of the Floor of the Mouth**
- Right index finger on floor of mouth
- Left middle and ring fingers under chin
- Gently move tongue out of way using your index finger
- Apply pressure as if to make fingers of both hands meet