

## **Press Release**

August 24, 2010



### **Altima Sheds Light on Oral Cancer with New Technology!**

**TORONTO, Ontario** – A new ground-breaking hand-held device called the VELscope® (Visually Enhanced Lesion) system has been adopted by Altima Dental Canada, among thousands of dentists worldwide as a revolutionary and effective new approach to screening for oral cancer.

VELscope® was developed by the British Columbia Cancer Agency and MD Anderson Cancer Centre with funding from the National Institutes of Health to enhance the oral health of patients worldwide. Currently, VELscope® is the first screening device cleared by the FDA and Health Canada for use by dentists and surgeons for oral cancer screening.

During an oral cancer screening, the VELscope® hand-held device is held at the base of the mouth while a safe blue light is emitted into the oral cavity. The blue light emitted by the VELscope® device causes normal, healthy cells in the oral cavity to become excited and illuminate green light. Any abnormal cells or lesions present in the oral cavity absorb the emitted blue light and appear irregular and dark.

By peering through the filters on the VELscope® hand piece, the dentist can detect abnormal lesions in the oral cavity like a brown highlighter on a piece of green paper.

Essentially, the VELscope® system works by visually enhancing a dentist's ability to detect abnormal lesions and oral cancer in the oral cavity that may be unseen by the naked eye.

Painless and non-invasive, an oral cancer screening with VELscope® can be performed as part of a regular oral exam in as little as 2 to 5 minutes without the use of unpleasant rinses or stains.

In addition, several commonly occurring conditions such as mucosal pigmentations, canker sores, irritations, and gingivitis may be detected as dark lesions by VELscope®. In this respect, if dark abnormal lesions are detected by the VELscope® system, the dental practitioner will perform further tests to confirm the presence or absence of pre-cancerous tissues<sup>1</sup>.

## **About Oral Cancer**

Approximately 3 people die each day from oral cancer in Canada.

Oral cancer is a preventable and prevalent cancer where the five-year survival rate is only 63%, which is lower than the survival rates of breast cancer, cervical cancer, and prostate cancer. However, with early detection of oral cancer the five-year survival rate can be as high as 90% and treatment becomes easier, less invasive, and more effective<sup>2</sup>.

Altima Dental Canada is pleased to offer advanced oral cancer checks using the VELscope® system – and offers **complimentary** oral cancer checks for every new patient. Altima Dental recommends all Canadians be checked for oral cancer on a yearly basis as part of a complete oral healthcare regime. Many Canadians don't realize they are at risk – even if they don't smoke.

Visit Altima Dental Canada at [www.altima.ca](http://www.altima.ca) to book your oral cancer exam – *it could save your life.*

## **About Altima Dental Canada**

Altima Dental is the largest dental network of its kind in Canada. With over 30 locations across Ontario and Alberta (also under the names BrightSmile and Dazzle Dental), the Altima network provides professional dental services to more than 200,000 patients yearly. 2010 marks Altima Dental's 17th year anniversary.

At Altima, the dentists and dental teams are committed to providing Canadians with the highest standards of patient-centered care. Altima's goal is to maintain and create beautiful, healthy smiles that will last a lifetime. From students to seniors, there is an Altima Advantage for you.

General and cosmetic dentistry services are offered at all Altima, BrightSmile and Dazzle Dental centres. Many centres also offer specialty services such as orthodontics, Invisalign, sedation dentistry, emergency dentistry, sports mouthguards, custom snoring and sleep apnea appliances, teeth whitening and oral surgery.

Altima offers 0% financing, convenient locations and extended hours. For more information and a list of locations, visit [www.altima.ca](http://www.altima.ca).

## **Sources**

<sup>1</sup>Pohl, John. (Jul 2010). VELscope Enhanced Oral Assessment System Honored by World Health Organization

<sup>2</sup>Statistics Canada & Health Canada

## **Media Contact**

Farzana Mawani, Marketing & Communications Manager

Altima, BrightSmile & Dazzle Dental Canada

1-888-4ALTIMA

[www.altima.ca](http://www.altima.ca)