



<b>TYPE</b>	<b>Professional Practice</b>
<b>NAME</b>	<b>Use of Oral Cancer Cytology Kits Policy</b>
<b>DATE APPROVED BY COUNCIL</b>	<b>March 1, 2013</b>

## CDO POSITION

- 1. The performing of oral cancer cytology tests does not fall within the current scope of practice for denturists in Ontario.**
- 2. Denturists who perform oral cancer cytology testing are acting outside the permitted scope of practice and authorized act for denturism in Ontario.**

## RATIONALE

### Scope of Practice

The current scope of practice for denturists in Ontario is defined in the *Denturism Act* as:

"The practice of denturism is the assessment of arches, missing some or all teeth and the design, construction, repair, alteration, ordering and fitting of removable dentures"

The scope of practice above does not include performing oral cancer cytology testing or communicating a diagnosis.

In the normal course of providing denture care to their patients, denturists are expected to conduct comprehensive oral examinations/assessments on their clients. The question of concern is where, if at all, the scoping or mucosal brushing fits into the current scope of practice as articulated above. When denturists - as regulated health professionals accountable to the College, perform any actions in the course of providing care to their patients, heightened expectations are created for the patients. This is for all acts performed, whether or not they are specifically addressed in the scope or considered to be in the "public domain". The performance of oral cancer cytology testing by denturists creates an expectation for the patient that the denturist will be in a position to communicate any results. This is concerning to the College.

### Controlled/Authorized Acts

Denturists in Ontario are authorized to perform the following controlled act, defined in the *Denturism Act* as:

*"In the course of engaging in the practice of denturism, a member is authorized, subject to the terms, conditions and limitations imposed on his or her certificate of registration, to fit and dispense removable dentures"*

The current controlled act is clear and speaks only to fitting and dispensing removable dentures. There are two controlled acts that would, in the College's view, need to be authorized to denturists in order for denturists to perform oral cancer cytology testing in their practice, and these are:

1. "Performing a procedure on the tissue below the dermis, or below the surface of a mucous membrane or in or below the surfaces of the teeth"

The act of brushing the mucosal surface with testing kits, which in the College's view, presents the potential to go below the surface of a mucous membrane, and this requires an act not authorized to denturists.

2. "Communicating to an individual or his or her personal representative a diagnosis identifying a disease or disorder as the cause of symptoms of the individual in circumstances in which it is reasonably foreseeable that the individual or his or her personal representative will rely on the diagnosis"

The College is concerned that the use of oral cancer cytology testing by denturists as a means to possibly detect or diagnose oral cancer may create an expectation that the denturist is in the position to communicate the results or diagnosis and this clearly does not fall within the ambit of the denturists' controlled act.

### Conclusions

1. Using a form of testing in order to detect or diagnose oral cancer does NOT fall within the ambit of the current controlled act authorized to denturists in Ontario.
2. Denturists who use oral cytology cancer testing kits are acting outside the ambit of their scope of practice and controlled act.
3. Where Velscopes are used as part of the oral assessment conducted by a denturist. The College reminds denturists that they are not permitted to communicate a diagnosis to a patient or their personal representative at any time or in any circumstance.
4. The College expects a denturist who detects something outside the normal expected result to refer the patient to a dentist or medical practitioner (failure to do so constitutes professional misconduct under the Denturism Act) and to do so in a manner that leaves the patient absolutely clear they have NOT received a diagnosis.

### RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

[Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991](#)

[Denturism Act, 1991](#)

### REVISION CONTROL

Date	Revision	Effective
June 6, 2013		June 6, 2013