

In Brief: Tiny particles can help find oral cancers

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An expert on oral cancers at the University of Illinois believes he has developed a means to diagnose them more precisely.

Kenneth Watkin told the Champaign News-Gazette that, as a bonus, the technique appears to reduce the side effects of treatment.

Watkin and a former graduate student, Michael McDonald, found that with tiny particles of gadolinium oxide, tumors show up more clearly on scans. The particles also increase the effectiveness of radiation treatment, allowing the use of smaller doses.

While head and neck cancers are comparatively rare, they kill about one person a day in the United States. Because of the site of the cancer, treatment can also be difficult for patients.

Watkin's research has been published in the journal *Academic Radiology*.

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