

Oral Health 101



Delaware Division of Public Health
Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services

A Winnable Battle

- Improving oral health for all Delawareans is one of our greatest public health and wellness opportunities.
- Dental disease is virtually 100 percent preventable, yet it is one of the most common chronic conditions in Delaware and across the U.S.
- This is a battle we can win, but it cannot be done by dentists alone.



You Have the Power to Prevent Dental Disease

- Tooth decay significantly impacts the health of Delawareans of all ages from all walks of life.
- As a trusted information source, there is no better oral health messenger than community organizations like yours.
- A broad range of support is needed to make oral health a priority.
- Together, we can empower and improve the quality of life for our residents.

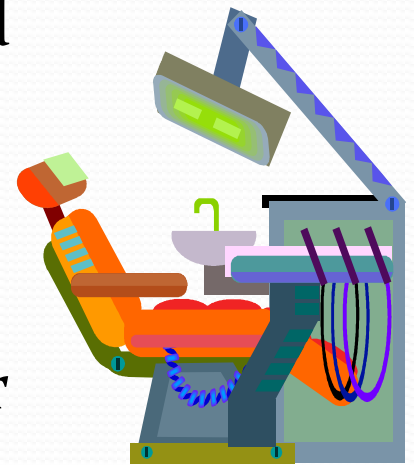
Oral Health = Overall Health



- Dental disease can affect more than just your teeth.
- It is linked to many other diseases, including diabetes and heart disease.
- If left untreated, oral infections can spread to other parts of the body and, in very rare cases, be life threatening.

Status of Oral Health in Delaware

- Dental care accounts for an estimated 9,000 annual emergency room visits.
- 47 percent of third-graders have experienced tooth decay.
- More than 45 percent of adults have had a permanent tooth extracted.
- Nearly 17 percent of adults aged 65 and older have had all their teeth extracted.
- More than 41 percent of those with disabilities have not seen a dentist in more than one year or have never had a dental visit.



Status of Oral Health in Delaware

Progress is being made!



- Compared to 2002, the percent of third-grade children with untreated tooth decay has been cut in half.
- The percent of third-graders with protective dental sealants has almost doubled.
- Delaware has met the CDC's Healthy People 2020 oral health objectives.

There's Still Work to be Done...

- Almost half of Delaware's third-grade children have experienced tooth decay.
- Many children are still not getting the dental care they need:
 - 3 percent of third-graders have never been to the dentist.
 - 16 percent of the third-grade children needed dental care for untreated decay in 2012.



Oral Health 101:

What is Tooth Decay?



- Tooth decay is an active process of tooth destruction by cavity causing germs.
- Those germs, or bacteria, adhere to tooth surfaces in a sticky film, called dental plaque.
- Sugars and starches feed the bacteria that produce acids that attack teeth and cause cavities.

Dental Disease is Preventable!

What can you do?

- **Remember cavities are contagious:** The germ that causes cavities can be passed from caregivers to their children.
- **Step away from the sweet drinks:** The best beverage for oral and overall health is fluoridated tap water.
- **Create good daily habits:** Everyone, starting from the time the first tiny tooth erupts, should brush morning and night and floss daily.
- **Get to the dentist twice a year:** Most dental insurance covers 100 percent of preventive care and Delaware's Medicaid program provides dental coverage for children.

Lifelong Practices:

A healthy smile should last a lifetime

- Children should have their first dental visit by age 1 and get dental sealants by age 6.
- Eat a balanced diet with plenty of water.
- Wear a mouth guard when playing sports.
- Avoid tongue, mouth, and lip piercings.
- Do not smoke or use tobacco products.



Prenatal Care: *Protect your baby's smile*

Oral health is especially important during pregnancy:



- Untreated dental disease may be linked to increased health risks for you and your baby.
- For morning sickness, rinse your mouth with a teaspoon of baking soda and water after vomiting; wait 30 minutes and then brush your teeth again.
- Chew sugarless gum after eating.

Infant Care: *Stop cavities before they start*

Babies aren't born with the germs that cause cavities – they get them from adults.

- Don't share spoons, forks, or cups.
- Put only formula, milk, or water in a baby bottle—no juice or sweet drinks.
- Don't dip pacifiers in honey or sugar.
- All children should see a dentist by their first birthday.



What are We Talking About?

A Glossary of Dental Terms

- **Abscess:** An infection of a tooth, soft oral tissue or bone.
- **Caries:** Destruction of tooth structure caused by toxins produced by bacteria.
- **Deciduous Teeth:** Commonly called "baby teeth," the first set of teeth.
- **Dental Sealants:** A plastic material that acts as a barrier to prevent cavities usually applied to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth.
- **Eruption:** The process of baby teeth appearing through the gums.
- **Extraction:** Removal of a tooth.
- **Gingivitis:** The inflammation of gum tissue.
- **Impaction:** A partial or completely unexposed tooth that is wedged against another tooth, bone, or soft tissue.

Glossary of Terms

- **Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon:** A dental specialist who manages the diagnosis and surgical treatment of diseases, injuries and deformities of the mouth and jaw.
- **Periodontal Disease:** Gum disease. An infection of the tissues that surround and support your teeth. It is a major cause of tooth loss in adults.
- **Plaque:** A soft, sticky substance that accumulates on teeth and is composed of bacteria and food debris due to inadequate dental hygiene.
- **Streptococcus Mutans:** The germs/bacteria that cause tooth decay.
- **Tartar:** A common term for dental calculus, a hard deposit that adheres to teeth and produces a rough surface that attracts plaque.
- **Topical Anesthetic:** An ointment that produces mild anesthesia when applied to the tissue surface.
- **Veneer:** A plastic or porcelain facing bonded directly to a tooth to improve its appearance.

Frequently Asked Questions

- How do I know one of my clients needs dental care?
- Is there a long wait to see a dentist?
- What if I don't have dental insurance?
- What tools are available to help me share this information?



FAQ: How do I know one of my clients needs dental care?

There are a number of signs to look for in someone who needs dental care. Here are a few of the most common:

- It has been a long time since their last dental visit.
- Experiencing mouth pain, toothaches, easily bleeding gums, or other oral issues.
- Obvious decay or missing permanent teeth.
- Heavy tobacco use.

FAQ: Is there a long wait to see a dentist? What about insurance?

On average, it generally takes about a week to get a dental appointment in Delaware. Dental services are free to Medicaid-eligible children under the age of 21 and CHIP-eligible children under the age of 19.

Getting an appointment can take longer for adults without dental insurance or the ability to pay. However, there are a number of state service centers, federally qualified health centers and other dental clinics in New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties that provide affordable care to all populations.

A link to all these resources and more is provided at the end of this training.

FAQ: What tools are available to help me share this information?

The Division of Public Health Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services has developed a comprehensive toolkit that provides simple tools that will help you easily make oral health a part of your organization's everyday activities.

A link to all of these resources is provided at the end of this training.





Now What?

Bridging the Gap: *From Prevention to Dental Care*

A Culture of Collaboration:

It takes a community of partners

There are dentists in your area who want to help you connect your clients with the care they need. Delaware has:

- Five state-based dental clinics
- Several federally qualified health center locations
- Hundreds of private dentists

A link to all these resources and more is provided at the end of this training.



A Culture of Collaboration: *We need your help!*



Dental disease impacts the health of Delawareans of all ages from all walks of life.

- Promote regular visits to a dentist.
- Promote home care and healthy habits.
- Promote oral health among your colleagues, peers, friends, and relatives.

Your Resources:

The Oral Health Toolkit

The ability to explain the connection between oral health and overall health can transform the wellbeing of the communities where we live and work.

These tools will help you empower your clients to take control of their oral health. They are free, easy to use and can be downloaded, as well as customized, to meet the specific needs of your organization.

Visit www.DelawareOralHealthToolkit.com to get started. Your tools include:

- Oral Health 101 Webinar
- Implementation Guidelines and Best Practices
- Educational Brochures
- Evaluation/Referral Worksheet
- Dental Resource Guide
- Newsroom and Archive

Still Have Questions? *We're Here to Help.*

Contact the Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services:

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