

Oral Health and General Health

“... the mouth reflects general health and well-being”¹



Oral Health Nevada Inc.: A Fact Sheet

What's the connection?

Oral health affects people physically, mentally, and socially by influencing how they grow, enjoy life, look, speak, chew, taste food, and feel about themselves. Many diseases, conditions, and medical treatments show symptoms and side effects in the mouth. Dental professionals may be the first to find them and recommend a medical check-up from your doctor. For your general health, it is important to have a complete dental exam from a dentist at least two times every year. Dental cleanings from a dental hygienist also be needed two or more times each year.

How does oral health affect general health?

Poor oral hygiene can affect the health of the body, causing bacterial infections like tooth decay and periodontal (gum) disease. Oral diseases share common risk factors with the four serious diseases – cardiovascular (heart) diseases, cancer, respiratory diseases (pneumonia), and diabetes. Some of these risk factors include overweight/obesity, tobacco use, and harmful alcohol use.

- Periodontal disease may be as a risk factor for other diseases that cause inflammation (swelling) in the body such as heart disease and rheumatoid arthritis.
- Periodontal disease can influence diabetes control, and vice versa.
- People who have long-term respiratory diseases and use inhalers have a higher risk for oral fungal infections, dry mouth, and tooth decay.
- Many medicines from the pharmacy have the side effect of dry mouth because they decrease the amount of saliva (spit) the body makes and delivers to the mouth. Too little saliva increases the risk for both tooth decay and periodontal disease, affects eating, and can be very uncomfortable.
- While most people know that smoking can lead to cancer, many don't realize that the use of any tobacco products including chew and snuff can lead to cancer of the mouth and pharynx, and the regular use of alcohol can vastly increase the risk of these cancers.

How is Nevada doing?

- ✓ Nevada is currently ranked 47th in overall health among all states in the US
- ✓ More than 8% of Nevadan adults are suffering from diabetes and it's the 10th leading cause of death
- ✓ Cardiovascular disease is the #1 and Stroke is the #5 killer of Nevadans
- ✓ 27.5% of Nevadan adults suffer from diagnosed hypertension (high blood pressure)
- ✓ Just 25% of Nevadan adults consume 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day
- ✓ 22% of the adult population in Nevada smokes on a regular basis
- ✓ 17.5% of Nevadans were identified as binge drinkers

For more dental health information visit our website – www.oralhealthnevada.com

