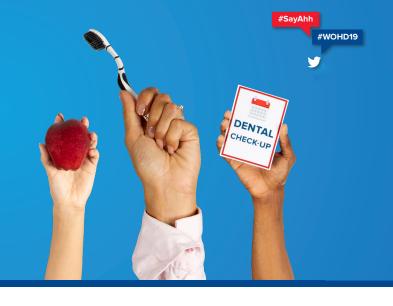


Fact sheet

World Oral Health Day 2019



- Oral diseases affect 3.58 billion people, which is equivalent to half of the world's population. They are the most common noncommunicable diseases (NCD) – not transmissible directly from one person to another – and affect people throughout their lifetime.
- Common oral diseases include tooth decay (dental caries), gum (periodontal) diseases and oral cancer. Tooth decay and gum diseases are major causes of tooth loss.
- Severe tooth loss (edentulism) is one of the 10 leading causes of years lived with disability in some high-income countries.
- Oral diseases can cause pain, discomfort, disfigurement, acute and chronic infections, eating and sleep disruption and even death. In developing countries, this is exacerbated due to lack of pain control and treatment not being readily available.
- Oral diseases and tooth loss should not be considered as unavoidable consequences of population ageing, as they impact both children and adults.
- Tooth decay (caries) is the most prevalent oral disease globally. An estimated 2.4 billion people suffer from caries of permanent teeth and 486 million children suffer from caries of primary (deciduous) teeth.
- Early childhood caries can negatively affect how a young mouth develops and can create lasting health issues for young children.
- ► Each year, millions of work and school days are lost to poor oral health, hence having a significant socioeconomic impact. For children, this can have a negative effect on their potential for success later in life.
- Oral health means the health of the mouth. It includes the ability to speak, smile, smell, taste, touch, chew, swallow and convey

- a range of emotions with confidence and without pain, discomfort and disease of the craniofacial complex.
- Poor oral health can be the result, as well as the cause, of poor general health. For example, oral diseases are linked with diabetes, heart disease, respiratory disease, and some cancers. Some of these relationships appear to be bi-directional, i.e. having diabetes increases the risk of getting gum disease and treatment of gum disease improves blood glucose levels.
- Dental check-ups can detect signs of nutritional deficiencies as well as diseases like bacterial infections, immune disorders and oral cancer. Regular professional cleanings can also help prevent tooth and gum disease.
- Most oral diseases share modifiable risk factors (influenced by habits, behaviours and lifestyle) with other major NCDs, such as heart disease, cancer, lung diseases and diabetes. Shared risk factors include unhealthy, high-sugar diets, tobacco use, and excessive alcohol consumption.
- Controlling oral disease risk factors can also have a positive impact on the rest of the body and quality of life, which is why oral health is essential to general health and well-being at every stage of life.
- Almost all oral diseases are either largely preventable or can be treated in their early stages to secure oral health.
- World Oral Health Day, taking place on 20 March, is the largest global awareness campaign on oral diseases. This year, under the theme of Say Ahh: Act on Mouth Health, the campaign motivates people to take action to protect their oral health and promotes proper selfcare, regular dental check-ups and management of risk factors to secure good oral health and general health.



