

SAY *Ahh*

ACT ON MOUTH HEALTH

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 self-care, regular dental check-ups and management of risk factors to secure good oral health and general health.