



Fact Sheet

Oral Health in America Advances and Challenges

A Report from the National Institutes of Health

Section 1: Effect of Oral Health on the Community, Overall Well-Being, and the Economy

Key Summary

- ☐ Good oral health supports overall health and well-being of individuals, families, communities, and the nation.
- ☐ Based on economic and social factors, some groups experience more disease and more barriers to care than the general population; the result is unacceptable, but reversible, inequities in oral health.
- ☐ Commercial interests play a dual role in affecting oral health, providing excellent products that support oral health, as well as products, such as tobacco and sugar-sweetened foods and beverages, that are detrimental to oral health.
- ☐ Lack of access to regular dental care can result in ineffective and expensive overuse of emergency departments.
- ☐ Poor oral health reduces the economic productivity of society by limiting participation in the workforce, as well as by increasing health care costs.
- ☐ Untreated oral disease can postpone entry to military service or delay deployment of troops to active duty, thus jeopardizing the nation's military readiness.
- ☐ Natural disasters, the emergence of novel pathogens, such as COVID-19, and other large-scale emergencies underscore the need for public-private partnerships that plan and ensure the continued delivery of essential oral health care in times of crisis.

Call to Action

- ☐ Policy changes are needed to reduce inequities in oral health status and care, ensuring that all Americans can enjoy the benefits of good oral health.



National Institute of Dental
and Craniofacial Research

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