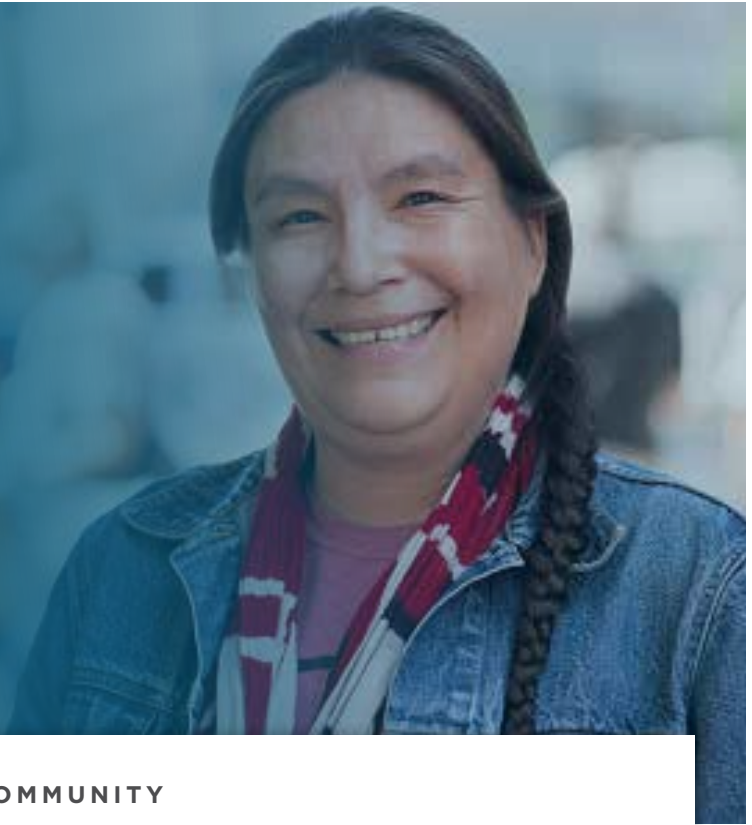


# Protecting Your Teeth Later in Life

It used to be that people could expect to lose all their teeth and wear dentures as a regular part of growing older. Now, most people keep their teeth for a lifetime.



## OUR COMMUNITY

Among American Indian and Alaskan Native communities, adults aged 65 to 74 are **disproportionately affected** by poor oral health. Many patients report aching in the mouth and avoid foods because of mouth problems.

### Percentage of Adult Dental Patients With Untreated Tooth Decay:

**19%**

General Population

**45%**

AI/AN Patients

## Here are Some Steps You Can Take to Care for Your Teeth and Mouth:



Keep your teeth and mouth clean. Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. Clean between teeth with floss.



If you have dentures or partials, clean them daily and continue to go to your dentist every six months. You will receive an oral cancer screening during your visits.



Make water with fluoride your first choice. Most tap water has fluoride, but most bottled water does not.



Replace sugary drinks like soda pop, juice, sweet tea, energy drinks, and sports drinks with water.



Eat a healthy diet that includes fruits and vegetables. Avoid candy and snack foods as much as possible.



Avoid non-ceremonial tobacco products of all kinds including cigarettes, chewing tobacco, vapes (JUUL), cigars,

# Oral Health and Overall Health



## Oral Health During Illness or Treatment

If you are suffering from or being treated for an illness, you may experience changes in the health of your mouth. Some medications have side effects such as dry mouth, which can increase the risk of tooth decay. It is important to continue to see your dentist during these times and to share information about your health, treatment and medications.



## Diabetes (high blood sugar)

People with diabetes are much more likely to develop gum disease. In addition to following the steps above, it is important to maintain a diet that is low in sugar and to see the dentist regularly.



## Healthy Heart & Weight

Along with physical activity, a diet that is low in sugar, salt and fat but high in fruits and vegetables is good for your overall health and helps maintain a healthy heart and weight. Avoiding the foods and drinks that cause weight gain means you are actively avoiding many of the same things that commonly cause cavities.



## Smoking & Tobacco

Using cigarettes, e-cigarettes and other tobacco products harms your teeth and mouth. People who smoke are twice as likely to lose their teeth as non-smokers and are much more likely to develop cancer of the cheek, lip, gums, tongue and areas of the throat and lungs. Non-ceremonial tobacco and vape products can lead to a lifetime of addiction. It's just better if you never start. Ask your physician or dentist about resources on how to quit.

\*(Source: Phipps KR and Ricks TL. The oral health of American Indian and Alaska Native adult dental patients: results of the 2015 HIS oral health survey. Indian Health Service data brief. Rockville, MD: Indian Health Service. 2016.)



**Teeth matter.**  
When our teeth are healthy,  
we feel good and we look good, too.

*The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.*

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