

Improving Seniors' Oral Health

Washington Dental Service Foundation



Nearly 1 in 4 seniors have severe periodontal disease and many suffer from untreated cavities.

Seniors are at higher risk for these oral diseases which have significant consequences for overall health and quality of life.

Fortunately, oral disease is highly preventable. The Washington Dental Service (WDS) Foundation is committed to prevention of oral disease among seniors.

Implementing Prevention Strategies that Work

The WDS Foundation engages oral health champions to:

- Bring attention to the significance of oral disease for seniors;
- Collaborate with medical and pharmaceutical professionals to reduce dry mouth through patient education, saliva substitutes, xylitol and fluoride products, and systems to warn patients of medication side effects;
- Implement comprehensive prevention programs for seniors that include screening, risk assessment, education, and prevention - including fluoride varnish applications.



7 out of the 10 most commonly used medications cause dry mouth, which can lead to cavities

Training Caregivers

Many seniors rely on family or paid caregivers to provide oral hygiene care. WDS Foundation developed a 10-hour continuing education curriculum to better prepare caregivers for this important role. This product is available at no expense to interested instructors. Over 700 caregivers have been trained in Washington to date.

Community Water Fluoridation

Fluoridation of water supplies is the most cost-effective way to prevent oral disease among people of all ages, including seniors. WDS Foundation works to raise awareness of the healthy benefits of water fluoridation and engage seniors in advocacy efforts.



Oral disease increases risk for heart disease and stroke and can exacerbate diabetes

The Washington Dental Service Foundation is Washington's largest foundation dedicated to improving oral health by supporting innovative approaches and focusing on oral disease prevention.

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Community Advocates for Oral Health