

Problems with Oral Health While Aging

Older adults have the poorest oral health due to a lack of insurance, being economically disadvantaged, living in a facility, being homebound or disabled. Additional factors also include racial and ethnic minorities.

The most common oral health conditions that affect older adults include tooth decay, gum disease, and oral cancer.

What is Oral Health?

Oral health refers to the health of the teeth, gums, and the entire oral-facial system that allows us to smile, speak, and chew. Dentition (den'tiSHen) is defined by the arrangement or condition of the teeth in an individual.

Ninety-six percent of adults 65-years or older have had a cavity. One in five had untreated tooth decay. Tooth decay also known as cavities are caused by a breakdown of tooth enamel by acids produced by bacteria located in plaque that collects on teeth.

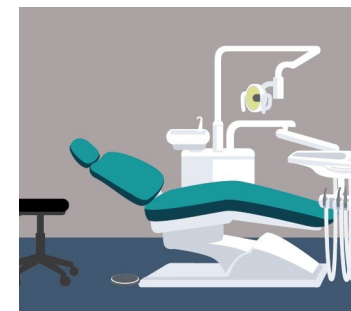
Gum disease also known as periodontal disease affects about 2 in 3 adults (68%).

Oral cancers of the mouth include oral and pharyngeal and are usually diagnose at age 62.

Tooth Loss & Chronic Disease

Other problems that affect older adults include tooth loss and chronic disease. About 1 in 5 adults 65-years or older have lost all of their teeth. Complete tooth loss usually occurs among adults aged 75 and older.

Nutritional needs are often affected when teeth are missing or wearing dentures. Some medications that are prescribed for chronic disease can cause dry mouth and reduce saliva production increasing the risk of cavities.



https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/basics/adult-oral-health/adult_older.tm