

Oral Health

Oral Health is fundamental to overall health, well-being, and quality of life. A healthy mouth enables people to eat, speak, and socialize without pain, discomfort, or embarrassment.

Pain from untreated dental diseases can lead to eating, sleeping, speaking, and learning problems in children and adolescents, which affect social interactions, school achievement, general health, and quality of life.

Most Common Oral Health Diseases in the Philippines

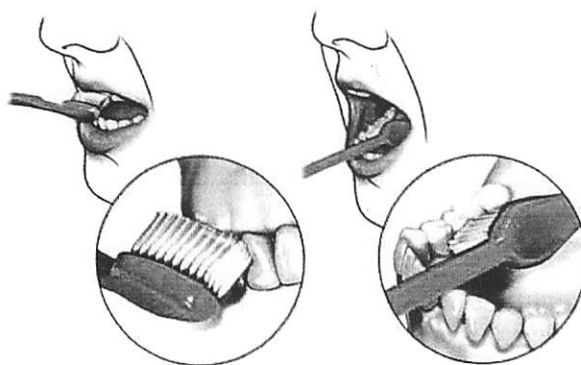
- Dental Caries (tooth decay)
- Periodontal Diseases (gum diseases)

Risk Factors

- Unhealthy diet
- Tobacco use
- Harmful alcohol use
- Poor oral hygiene

Oral Health Practices

- **Promote balanced diet.** The development of sound teeth begins while still in the womb of the mother and continues throughout life. Pregnant and lactating women should have a well-balanced diet. Minimize eating sugary foods.
- **Promote correct eating habits among children.** Start with exclusive breastfeeding from birth up to 6 months and continued breastfeeding up to 2 years with timely, adequate, and safe



complementary foods starting at 6 months.

- **Practice good oral hygiene.** Promote the practice of self-care for oral health.
 - Brush teeth and vigorously rinse mouth after meals.
 - Use fluorides and sealants and good plaque control (can be obtained from fluoridated water, salt, milk, mouthwash, or toothpaste).
 - Brush and floss teeth regularly and properly at least twice a day.
- **Visit the dentist periodically.** Bring young children to visit the dentist as soon as the first tooth erupts (normally 6 months old and every 6 months thereafter).
- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle.** Avoid tobacco smoking, drugs, and alcohol.

References

- Department of Health Philippines. Administrative Order No. 2007-0007. "Guidelines in the Implementation of Oral Health Program for Public Health Services."
- FHO and NCDPC, DOH and WHO