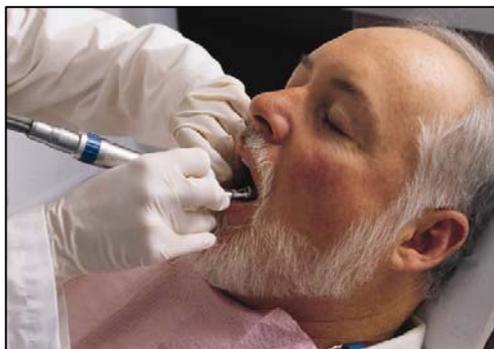


# Oral Health Practices For Senior Adults



Oral health is vital to general health and well-being and means more than just healthy teeth. Often times, problems in the mouth can signal trouble in other parts of the body. Studies indicate an increased risk of heart disease and stroke in people with gum infections. Likewise, gum infections have been linked to diabetes and osteoporosis. Good oral health practices should continue into the senior adult years even if dentures are worn.

Follow the tips below to help maintain your oral health:

- Drink fluoridated water and use fluoride toothpaste.
- Brush and floss at least twice a day.
- Schedule routine check-ups with your dentist.
- Avoid tobacco use. Tobacco used in any form increases the risk for periodontal disease, oral and throat cancers, and oral infection.
- Limit alcohol intake. Drinking a high amount of alcoholic beverages is a risk factor for oral and throat cancers.

## Tips Continued

- Caregivers should reinforce daily oral hygiene routines of elders who are unable to perform these activities independently.
- Sudden changes in taste and smell should not be considered signs of aging, but should be a sign to seek professional care.
- If medications produce a dry mouth, ask your doctor if other drugs may be substituted. If dry mouth cannot be avoided, drink plenty of water, chew sugarless gum, and avoid tobacco and alcohol.
- See your dentist prior to having cancer chemotherapy or radiation to the head or neck.

## For More Information About Oral Health Contact:

Mississippi State Department of Health  
Office of Oral Health  
Phone: 601-576-7500  
Fax: 601-576-8190  
[www.HealthyMS.com](http://www.HealthyMS.com)

## Need Help Locating a Dentist in Your Community?

Mississippi Dental Association  
Phone: 601-982-0442  
[www.ms dental.org](http://www.ms dental.org)

**MISSISSIPPI STATE**  
**UNIVERSITY**  
**EXTENSION SERVICE**

Source: "Oral Health for Older Americans"  
[www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/publications/factsheets/adult\\_older.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/publications/factsheets/adult_older.htm)

This material is based upon work supported by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under Award No. 2004-46100-03006. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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