



IMPROVING ORAL HEALTH

FOR OLDER ADULTS



# Objectives

- Why is oral health important?
- What happens to our teeth as we age?
- What are common oral health issues among older adults?
- What do we need to do to maintain good oral health?



# Oral Health Is Important

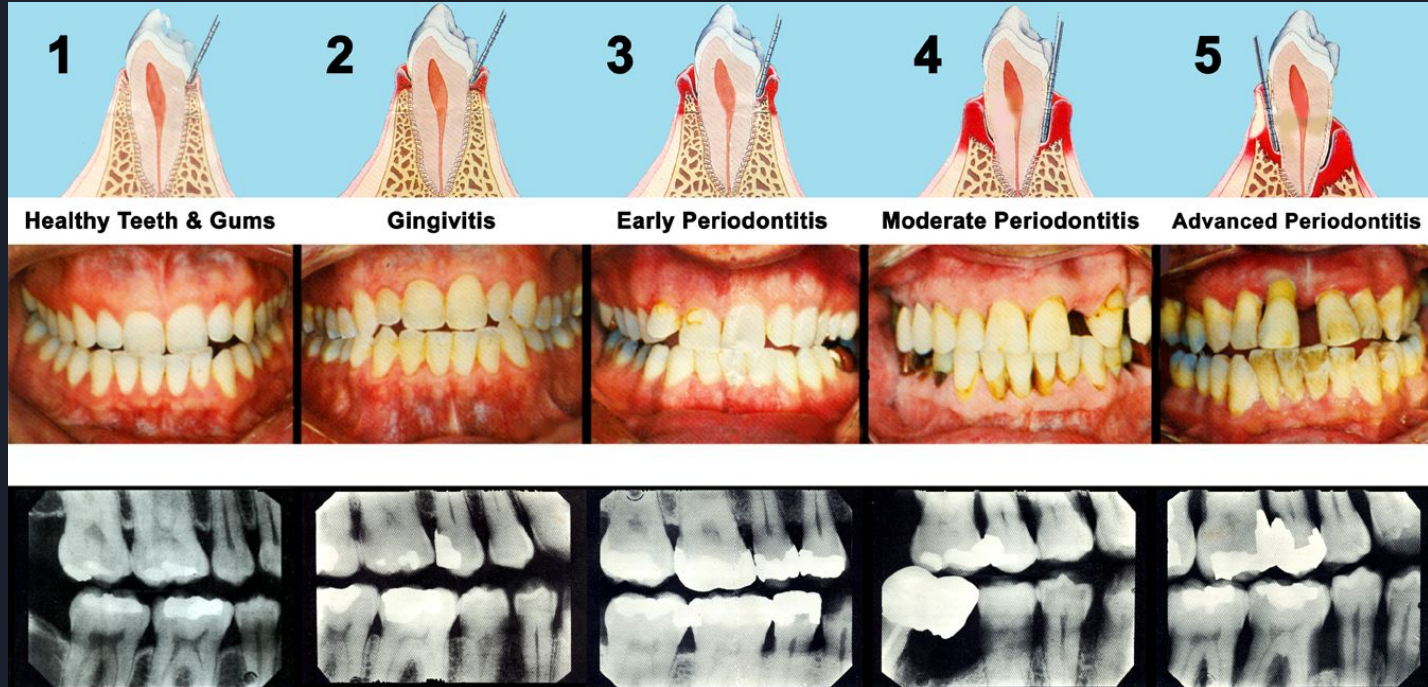
- **Healthier Nutrition**
  - Eat more frequently and more easily when our bite is well supported, not missing teeth, and no pain exists
  - Less frequent cognitive impairment
- **Natural Appearance**
  - Replacement of missing teeth and a healthy smile will not only increase likelihood of seeing a smile but also boosts confidence of seniors when they look younger
  - Smiling more releases hormones in our body that decrease blood pressure and increase immune health
- **Improved Speech**
  - Many sounds made in our speech are impacted by our teeth, replacement of missing teeth and the overall health of our mouth greatly impacts how we sound
- **Better Breath**
  - Increases likelihood seniors will look forward to seeing loved ones and not feel withdrawn
  - Increases social interaction in their new living community
- **Prevention**
  - Prevent oral disease leading to loss of teeth or other dental treatment/emergencies
  - Oral health is linked to a number of diseases in the elderly such as heart disease, cancer, dementia, arthritis, and many more



# How Does Our Mouth Change As We Age?

- **Xerostomia**
  - Dryness of the mouth naturally or can be induced from medications and disease
  - Increased rate of cavities
- **Recession**
  - Gingiva (gum tissue) recedes exposing roots
  - Increased rate of cavities on roots
  - Sensitivities to temperature
- **Bone Loss**
  - Degradation of the bone supporting our teeth is exacerbated by periodontal disease and is the number 1 reason for lost teeth....NOT CAVITIES

# Periodontal Disease Progression





# Gum Disease & Your Whole & Body Health

Over 50% of adults in the U.S. have some degree of gum disease.  
But did you know the impact goes far beyond your mouth...

## Osteoporosis



People with gum disease may be at a higher risk of osteoporosis.

## Stroke



People with severe gum disease have a **3x to 4x** higher risk of brain stroke.

## Alzheimer's & Dementia



Gum disease may be linked to Alzheimer's disease and dementia from oral bacteria that spread through the bloodstream.

## Cancer



Several studies show strong evidence linking gum disease with an increased risk of oral cancer and pancreatic cancer.

## Respiratory Disease



Gum disease can worsen conditions such as COPD and may play a role in the contraction of pneumonia, bronchitis & emphysema.

## Heart Disease



People with gum disease are **2x** as likely to have heart disease.

## Diabetes



Nearly **22%** of diabetes patients have gum disease.

## Rheumatoid Arthritis



RA patients are **8x** more likely to have gum disease.



# Oral Health Issues Among Older Adults

- Arthritis
  - Increased difficulty brushing, flossing and maintaining oral health by oneself
- Cognitive Impairment
  - Forget about oral hygiene
  - Poor nutrition
  - Stresses/fears of the dentist that may not have existed previously
- Xerostomia - Dry Mouth
  - Increased rate of cavities
  - Difficulty wearing dentures
- Decreased Mobility
  - Less frequent visits to the dentist
- Bone Loss
- Loss of taste
- Oral Cancers



# Tips and Tricks

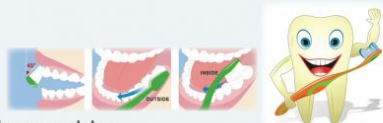
- Large handle brush or use of a tennis ball
  - Improved dexterity
- Electric toothbrush
  - If patient refuses, try different types of brushes until patient is more accepting
- Waterpik
- Provide short, simple instructions that are broken down into steps
- 'Watch Me' technique
- Brush shorter but more frequently
- Non-alcohol based mouthrinse
- Regular dental checkups
- Create repeatable routines
- Give patients stress balls or other aids to help ease anxiety or tremors
- Mouth props



# HOW TO KEEP YOUR DENTURES CLEAN

## REMEMBER:

### BRUSH-SOAK-BRUSH

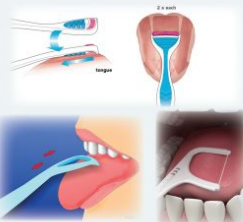


Always **brush** your dentures thoroughly before soaking, to remove loose food particles. Never use hot water; it can warp your dentures.



**Soak** your dentures overnight to keep them moist and to keep their shape.

Before reinserting your dentures, **brush** your gums, tongue and roof of your mouth with a toothbrush.



## HELPFUL TIPS



Handle with care. Your dentures can be broken. Clean them over a bowl of water or a towel in case you drop them.

Schedule regular dental checkups to have your dentures professionally cleaned. If they begin to slip or cause discomfort, notify your dentist. Loose dentures can cause irritation, sores and infection.

Thank You!

