



Fact Sheet

Oral Health in America Advances and Challenges

A Report from the National Institutes of Health

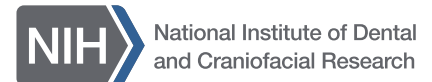
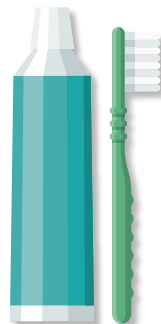
Section 2A: Oral Health Across the Lifespan: Children

Key Summary

- In the past 20 years, we have made some progress in reducing dental caries, also called tooth decay, but not all children have benefited equally.
- About half of all American children do not receive regular dental care because of social, economic, and geographic obstacles.
- Integrating dental care within family and pediatric medical care settings is improving children's oral health.
- Nearly 1 in 5 children have special physical or health care needs; providers trained in active prevention and management of these children's oral health problems help to support their overall health and quality of life.
- More effective approaches to preventing and treating dental cavities are emerging from better understanding of the social determinants of health, high-risk behaviors, and caregiver and provider oral health literacy.
- As dental caries become better controlled, other conditions should be addressed, such as dental erosion, which is an increasing cause of tooth destruction in youths.

Call to Action

- Public policies and improved training are needed to reduce oral health inequities by encouraging health providers to focus more on individual and public health approaches to preventing the occurrence of new disease and managing disease earlier.



www.nidcr.nih.gov/oralhealthinamerica

December 2021