

# Oral Health Affects General Health

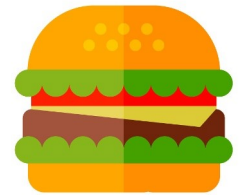
## How does oral health affect general health?

- Shared risk factors link oral health to diseases like cancer, diabetes, stroke, and heart disease.
- Oral health affects people physically and psychologically by influencing how they speak, chew, taste food, and socialize. The mouth must be kept healthy to function correctly.



## Risk factors for oral health:

- Commercial tobacco use (smoking tobacco, smokeless tobacco, and vaping)
- Alcohol use
- Poor nutrition such as high sugar intake
- Poor oral hygiene



## Oral diseases:

### Dental cavities

Cavities, also known as dental caries or tooth decay, are caused by the breakdown of the tooth's enamel by acids.

### Gum disease

Plaque grows below the gum line and irritates the gums. The teeth and gums separate, which causes the tissues and bones to break down around the mouth.

### Oral cancer

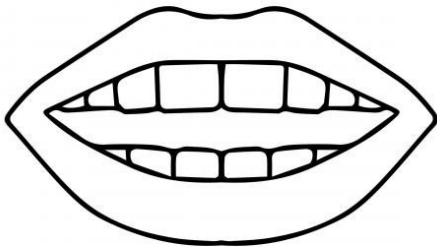
Oral cancer is found in the mouth and throat. It can appear as red or white patches, lumps, numbness, or swelling.

## Tips to improve oral health:

- Drink fluoridated water.
- Brush teeth twice per day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss teeth daily.
- Visit a dental provider at least once a year.
- Avoid commercial tobacco use.
- Limit alcohol use.
- Eat a healthy diet.



## Check out Wisconsin's numbers:



**4,656** new oral cancer cases  
+  
**976** oral cancer deaths<sup>1</sup>



**58.9%** of people with diabetes reported having at least one permanent tooth extracted due to tooth decay or gum disease.<sup>2</sup>

Gum disease can increase a person's risk of stroke and heart disease.



**12,625** deaths have occurred due to heart disease.<sup>3</sup>



**~80%** of strokes are preventable.<sup>4</sup>



For more information, please visit the Wisconsin Oral Health Program's website: [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/oral-health](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/oral-health).

1. Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics, Wisconsin Cancer Reporting System. Query term "oral cavity and pharynx." Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH) data query system, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/index.htm>. Cancer Module, accessed 9/27/2023.
2. Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Behavioral Risk Factor Survey 2020.
3. Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics. Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH) data query system, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/index.htm>, Mortality Module, accessed 4/19/2023.
4. Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services. (2023). *Coverdell Stroke Program: Part of Wisconsin Chronic Disease Prevention Program*. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/coverdell/index.htm>.