



Connecticut State Dental Association

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CONNECTICUT DENTISTS WARN AGING AMERICANS ABOUT ORAL HEALTH RISKS

National 'Older Americans Month' should remind seniors of oral health issues

HARTFORD – As part of Older Americans Month in the U.S., the [Connecticut State Dental Association](http://www.CSDA.com) (CSDA) and its members are stressing the critical importance of oral health for aging Americans. Many seniors are unaware of the link between oral health and many serious medical problems. The CSDA is offering insight into the importance of oral health for seniors, as well as strategies for maintaining strong oral health as we age.

Studies show a connection between a healthy mouth and a healthy body, and the connection becomes more important as we age. Increasing medical evidence suggests that an unhealthy mouth may worsen serious medical problems such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Nutrition is also of vital importance to seniors, especially given that malnutrition rates are higher among seniors who lose their natural teeth. Aging Americans should talk with their dentists not only about the importance of routine oral health maintenance such as brushing and flossing, but also about what types of oral care products will be most effective for seniors.

“We know that oral health is vital for overall health, but unfortunately many people become more lax about their oral healthcare and maintenance as they age, when if anything they need to be even more diligent,” said Dr. Lawrence Singer, Chair of the CSDA Committee on Issues of Older Adults and Special Needs Patients. “Dentists serve as the first line of defense in helping seniors maintain strong oral health to avoid developing or worsening serious medical problems. We strongly encourage Connecticut seniors to speak with their dentists about strategies for oral health.”

According to the CSDA oral health among seniors has national implications as well, given the shifting age demographics in the United States. According to the U.S. Administration on Aging, the U.S. will see a large increase in its elderly population as the first of 78-million baby boomers (people born between 1946 and 1964) begin retiring in the coming years. A failure to properly maintain oral health could put added stress on our health care system.

“Bleeding gums or loose teeth are not normal at any age and seniors especially should be on the lookout as these are usually signs of an infection called periodontal disease,” continued Dr. Singer. “Left untreated, the disease can destroy the gum tissues and bone around our teeth. Periodontal infections can be serious and can affect not only the mouth, but potentially our overall health. For seniors who are already concerned about other health issues, oral issues can seriously compound existing medical problems.”

About Connecticut State Dental Association

The Connecticut State Dental Association (CSDA) has 2,700 members including dentists, dental hygienists and dental assistants. As the trusted leader and voice for oral health care in CT, the CSDA has advocated for the public's health and promoted the art and science of dentistry since 1864. For more information about the CSDA, visit the Association's Web site at www.csda.com.

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