

Take Charge of Your Oral Health

Poor oral health impacts more than the smile. Untreated oral disease contributes to systemic health problems such as cardiovascular disease, decreased immunity, pneumonia, and the risk of having premature, low weight newborns. Risk factors are characteristics or exposures that increase the chances of oral health problems. Many of these risk factors for poor oral health are also present for the most common health issues. These include:

- Age
- Gender
- Family History
- Tobacco and/or Alcohol Use
- Inadequate Nutrition
- Poor growth and obesity

Oral health is uniquely threatened daily and has predictable outcomes for general health across the life span. At birth, each person has optimal oral health. Infants acquire harmful oral bacteria from their primary caregivers; many caregivers have misconceptions or lack proper education about children's oral health. Adolescents with poor diets, inadequate supervision, and lack of ongoing preventive dental care, will increase their oral risk and subsequently harm their general health. Children suffering from chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, congenital birth problems or developmental delays, present greater challenges to their primary caregivers and are at increased risk for poor oral health.

Adolescents have the highest risk for poor oral health and need their caregivers support to help attain competence to protect it. Good oral health will significantly benefit their future health and wellbeing as adults and seniors.

Entering adulthood, oral health has more profound effects on women of child-bearing age than men of the same age group. Pregnant women are at higher risk for dental problems, such as bleeding gums, and dental bone loss due to fetal calcium intake. The oral health of mothers also has a dramatic impact on the health and well being of their babies.

Oral health is the most common chronic life long health concern and shares many "predictable" threats with general health. It provides an easy opportunity to facilitate health and wellness by using continuous monitoring and education to change harmful lifestyle choices and encouraging timely preventive health care visits.

My SmileGuide is a unique, secure, and personalized on line software tool that **assesses, tracks, and monitors** an individual's oral health **from birth into their elderly years**. **My SmileGuide** is easy to use for caregivers, individuals, and heads of household. Unique features of **My SmileGuide** include:

- Easy to read age and gender specific oral health risk assessments.
- Individualized health reports that explain how poor oral health begins.
- Personalized guidance to reduce risk of illness and increase healthy habits.
- Personalized folders for managing health assessments and reports.

- Email alerts to notify of risk and remind members to return for reassessment.
- Email alerts to notify members when they are due for preventive dental visits.
- Email alerts to record the outcome of visits in member's health folders.

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