

ORAL HEALTH FOR ALL

Did you know?

Oral diseases affect around 3.7 billion people worldwide and cost the global economy an estimated US\$710 billion every year.

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO PREVENTIVE ORAL HEALTH CARE

This fact sheet is primarily for **policymakers**, but can also support other **stakeholders** and **advocates** working to improve preventive oral health care in their communities and countries.

Investing in equitable access to preventive oral health care can improve oral and general health, reduce pressure on health systems and make better use of limited resources.

INTEGRATE ORAL HEALTH INTO UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE AND PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

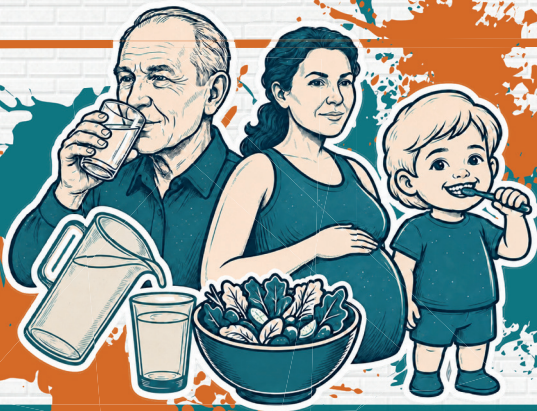
Universal health coverage (UHC) means: everyone can access the quality health services they need—including health promotion, disease prevention, treatment and rehabilitation—without experiencing financial hardship. Primary health care (PHC) is the foundation of UHC and provides a key platform for delivering essential oral health services throughout the life course.

The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies: the integration of oral health into UHC and PHC as one of the highest priorities for improving access to care. Countries should include essential oral health services within publicly financed health benefit packages and deliver prevention, early detection and basic treatment through primary health care. See the [WHO Global Strategy and Action Plan on Oral Health](#).



INTEGRATING ORAL HEALTH INTO PHC CAN:

- ➔ Improve access to essential oral health services.
- ➔ Reduce inequalities in oral health.
- ➔ Reduce reliance on expensive specialist care.
- ➔ Improve overall health outcomes.
- ➔ Support more efficient, people-centred health systems.



**World Oral
Health Day**
20 March



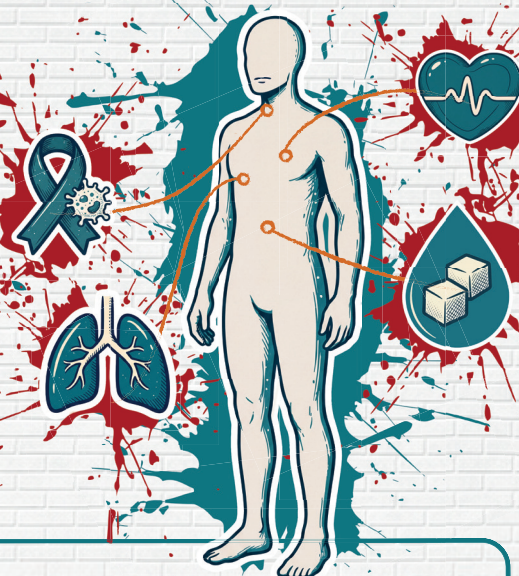
EVERYONE,
EVERYWHERE
IS INVITED
TO JOIN US

#GENERATIONSMILE
#WOHD27

[WORLDORALHEALTHDAY.ORG](https://www.worldoralhealthday.org)



ORAL HEALTH FOR ALL



INTEGRATE ORAL HEALTH INTO BROADER NCD PREVENTION POLICIES

Oral diseases share common risk factors with other major noncommunicable diseases (NCDs): such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases.

THESE SHARED RISK FACTORS INCLUDE:

- ➔ Tobacco use.
- ➔ Unhealthy diets high in sugar.
- ➔ Harmful alcohol use.

Taking an integrated approach can: enable governments to address multiple diseases through coordinated action, improving health outcomes while making better use of limited health resources. WHO also calls for oral health to be embedded within national NCD strategies and broader health policies.



TACKLE THE BIGGEST THREAT TO HEALTH: TOBACCO

Tobacco is one of the leading preventable causes of oral diseases, other NCDs and premature death worldwide. **No form of tobacco is safe**, whether smoked or smokeless. This includes cigarettes, cigars, waterpipes, smokeless tobacco and other tobacco products, as well as betel-quid and areca-nut chewing.

GOVERNMENTS SHOULD:

- ➔ Implement comprehensive **tobacco control policies**.
- ➔ Enforce **comprehensive bans** on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, particularly where they target children and young people.
- ➔ Raise **taxes** on tobacco products.
- ➔ Implement policies to **protect children** from exposure to tobacco smoke.
- ➔ **Integrate brief interventions** on tobacco use into PHC.
- ➔ **Regulate electronic nicotine delivery systems** and all other nicotine-containing products in the same way as tobacco products.

AI GENERATED



World Oral
Health Day
20 March



EVERYONE,
EVERYWHERE
IS INVITED
TO JOIN US

#GENERATIONSMILE
#WOHD27

WORLDORALHEALTHDAY.ORG



ORAL HEALTH FOR ALL



REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF FREE SUGARS

High consumption of free sugars is the leading dietary cause of dental caries and a major risk factor for obesity, diabetes and other NCDs. Reducing free sugar intake benefits both oral health and general health.



GOVERNMENTS SHOULD:

- ➔ Include taxes and levies on sugar-sweetened beverages and foods high in free sugars.
- ➔ Provide clear front-of-pack nutrition labelling.
- ➔ Restrict marketing of foods and beverages high in free sugars to children.
- ➔ Promote healthy food environments in schools, workplaces and public institutions.
- ➔ Support access to clean drinking water as a healthy alternative to sugary drinks.
- ➔ Promote breastfeeding and healthy infant feeding practices.

REDUCE THE HARMFUL USE OF ALCOHOL

Harmful alcohol use is strongly linked to an increased risk of several cancers, including cancers of the mouth, larynx, pharynx and oesophagus. In addition, the acid and high sugar content of many alcoholic drinks can erode tooth enamel and increase the risk of tooth decay.

GOVERNMENTS SHOULD:

- ➔ Implement the [WHO SAFER](#) package to reduce the harmful use of alcohol.
- ➔ Integrate alcohol screening and brief interventions into PHC.
- ➔ Restrict alcohol marketing, particularly to children and young people.
- ➔ Increase alcohol taxes and pricing measures, where appropriate.
- ➔ Raise public awareness of the links between alcohol, oral cancer and other NCDs.

ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO OPTIMAL FLUORIDE

WHO identifies optimal fluoride delivery as one of the most effective, safe and cost-effective population measures for preventing dental caries, the most common oral disease, which affects an estimated 2.5 billion people worldwide. Countries should develop national guidance on optimal fluoride delivery and ensure equitable access to evidence-based fluoride interventions appropriate to local needs.



GOVERNMENTS SHOULD:

- ➔ Ensure affordable access to fluoride toothpaste for everyone.
- ➔ Promote the daily use of fluoride toothpaste containing 1,000–1,500 ppm fluoride, consistent with WHO recommendations.
- ➔ Implement population-based fluoride programmes where appropriate, including community water fluoridation or other suitable fluoride delivery systems, based on local epidemiology, population needs and national context.
- ➔ Increase access to professionally applied fluoride interventions, including fluoride varnish and silver diamine fluoride, particularly for populations at high risk of dental caries.

AI GENERATED



World Oral
Health Day
20 March



EVERYONE,
EVERYWHERE
IS INVITED
TO JOIN US

#GENERATIONSMILE
#WOHD27

WORLDORALHEALTHDAY.ORG



ORAL HEALTH FOR ALL



STRENGTHEN ORAL HEALTH PROMOTION AND LITERACY

Health promotion and oral health literacy empower people and communities to prevent oral diseases, adopt healthy behaviours and make informed decisions about their oral health throughout life.

GOVERNMENTS SHOULD:

- ➔ Integrate oral health into national health promotion and health literacy programmes.
- ➔ Deliver evidence-based oral health promotion across the life course, with targeted interventions for priority populations.
- ➔ Promote twice-daily toothbrushing with fluoride toothpaste and other evidence-based self-care practices.
- ➔ Strengthen oral health literacy through education, community engagement and health promotion programmes in schools, communities and primary health care settings.
- ➔ Use digital technologies and mass media to improve oral health literacy and public awareness.
- ➔ Monitor and evaluate oral health promotion programmes.



MEASURE PROGRESS THROUGH ORAL HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Reliable oral health data are essential for planning services, identifying inequalities, and monitoring progress towards UHC.

GOVERNMENTS SHOULD:

- ➔ Integrate oral health indicators into national health information systems.
- ➔ Use the WHO Global Oral Health Action Plan [monitoring framework](#).
- ➔ Monitor access to essential oral health services, prevention coverage and oral health outcomes.
- ➔ Use data to guide continuous improvement and evidence-informed policymaking.



AI GENERATED



**World Oral
Health Day**
20 March



EVERYONE,
EVERYWHERE
IS INVITED
TO JOIN US

#GENERATIONSMILE
#WOHD27

WORLDORALHEALTHDAY.ORG

