



News For Older Americans



Good Dental Care Is An Important Part Of A Healthier Life For Seniors

(NAPS)—While it's often overlooked, good dental health plays an important role in keeping older adults healthy.

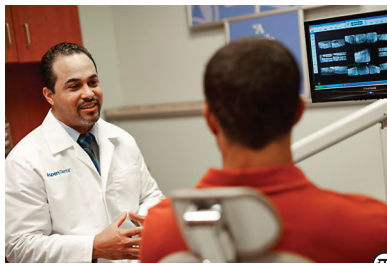
Poor oral health care can lead to the deterioration of teeth and gums, infections in the mouth that turn into more serious illnesses such as pneumonia, and cardiovascular disease.

And missing teeth is no excuse to skip dental visits—experts say visiting the dentist is not just for teeth cleaning, but is also an opportunity for dentists to screen for oral cancer, check denture fittings and help with many critical issues.

Dental care tips offered by the American Dental Association are essentially the same across all age groups. Adults are encouraged to:

- Brush their teeth and gums at least twice a day with a fluoride-containing toothpaste
- Floss at least once a day; preferably twice a day to remove food particles in tough-to-reach places
- Visit their dentist every six months for a routine cleaning and oral exam
- Use an antibacterial mouth rinse to reduce bacteria buildup.

According to leading dentists, however, there are issues specific to treating the elderly that should be



Older adult patients may sometimes lack the motor skills and sharp memory needed to properly care for their oral hygiene.

addressed and closely monitored.

Dr. Scott Dickinson, Aspen Dental practice owner from Pace, Fla., has treated many elderly patients and notes that the aging process can make oral care more challenging, particularly as older adults lose some dexterity.

Dr. Dickinson offers these tips to avoid a decline in wellness due to poor oral health care:

- Certain prescriptions can affect the healing process of dental procedures. Older adults who are prescribed medicine to keep their bones strong might run the risk of a slower healing process after an extraction or cavity procedure. As a preventative measure, dentists need to consult with the patient's doctor about their medicines and check that it's safe to go

ahead with dental work.

- A dry mouth can increase cavities. Some medications cause dry mouth, which is often seen among elderly patients. If the mouth doesn't produce enough saliva, plaque and food do not get naturally washed away, leading to a higher incidence of cavities.

- Ill-fitting dentures can lead to poor nutrition. Dr. Dickinson often sees patients who haven't maintained their dentures, leading to a painful chewing experience. A quick denture fitting can alleviate the pain and ensure that the patient can enjoy his or her meals—and once again get proper nutrition.

Receiving dentures is a big step, and the dentists who own and operate Aspen Dental-branded practices are committed to patients' complete satisfaction. Through a recently introduced Denture Money-Back Guarantee program, patients have the peace of mind knowing that if they are dissatisfied with their full or partial ComfiDents® denture for any reason, their Aspen Dental practice will refund the cost of the denture, no questions asked.

For more information, call 800-ASPEN-DENTAL (800-277-3633) or visit the website at www.aspendental.com.