

Oral health care for older adults



(NC) Dental hygienists remind seniors and their caregivers about the importance of caring for your teeth and mouth to maintain good oral and overall health.

Thanks to healthier lifestyles, as well as advances in oral and medical care, we can expect to keep most, if not all, of our natural teeth as we age. But keeping those teeth healthy can be a challenge. Many medications can cause dry mouth, a condition that can contribute to cavities and other oral problems. Seniors also develop more cavities on the roots of their teeth than younger adults. And, perhaps

most worrisome, bacteria from the mouth can travel through the body, resulting in serious infections affecting overall health.

All older adults should be encouraged to brush their natural teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and clean in between their teeth at least once a day. Dentures (full or partial) should be cleaned and soaked daily, and the gums should be brushed and massaged, either with a soft toothbrush or with a warm, damp cloth.

Whether you're at home or in a long-term care residence, good oral hygiene coupled with regular treatments by a dental hygienist can help to prevent more serious health problems. Together, you can plan a daily oral care routine that will keep your teeth, and you, healthy for life.

More information is available online at www.dentalhygienecanada.ca.

www.newscanada.com