

## In This Issue

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Oral health is a critical component of overall health and well-being, and it is also an essential aspect of public health. The condition of a person's oral health can affect their ability to speak, eat, and socialize comfortably. Oral health problems can also lead to pain, infection, and other serious health issues, such as cardiovascular disease, respiratory infections, and diabetes.

April is Oral Cancer Awareness Month, highlighting the importance of early detection and prevention of this deadly disease. Oral cancer can occur in any part of the mouth, including the tongue, gums, lips, and tonsils. It is essential to maintain good oral hygiene habits and receive regular dental check-ups to detect any signs of oral cancer early.

Sugar is one of the leading causes of tooth decay, which is the most common chronic disease among children and adults. When sugar is consumed, it interacts with the bacteria in the mouth to produce acid, which can erode the enamel on the teeth and cause cavities. It is crucial to limit the intake of sugary foods and drinks to maintain good oral health.

In addition to cavities, odontogenic infections can also occur due to poor oral hygiene. These infections are caused by bacteria that enter the tooth or gum tissue, causing swelling, pain, and other symptoms. In severe cases, they can lead to systemic infections, which can be life-threatening. In a national effort to improve the health and well-being of All Americans, the Healthy People 2030 initiative includes goals to improve oral health by promoting good oral hygiene habits, increasing access to dental care, and reducing the incidence of oral diseases.

One oral health issue that has gained attention in recent years is Medication-Related Osteonecrosis of the Jaws (MRONJ). This condition can occur in individuals taking certain medications, such as bisphosphonates, which are commonly used to treat osteoporosis and other bone diseases. MRONJ can cause severe pain, swelling, and other complications, making it essential for individuals taking these medications to inform their dental care providers.

Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) also require specialized dental care. These individuals may have difficulty communicating or may have unique oral health needs due to their disabilities. It is essential to provide IDD individuals with the necessary dental care to maintain their oral health and overall well-being.

Safety in the dental office is critical for both patients and dental professionals. Dental offices must adhere to strict infection control protocols to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, and dental professionals must follow proper safety procedures when handling equipment and administering anesthesia.

In this issue of the Delaware Journal of Public Health, guest editors Daniel J. Meara, MD, DMD, and Jeffrey Cole, DDS, MBA have brought together a diverse set of articles about these and other oral health, treatment, and workforce issues.

As always, we have included a resources section as well as a lexicon of terms. We welcome your feedback and thoughts!

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