



THE CANADIAN DENTAL  
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION  
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE  
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES

For immediate release (Offert en français sur demande)

## Media Release

### Dental Hygienists Urge Canadians to Say No to Tobacco

January 15, 2021 (Ottawa, ON) — Canada's dental hygienists will mark National Non-Smoking Week (January 17–23) by urging all Canadians to stop tobacco use for better oral and overall health.

Tobacco use has long been recognized as a risk factor for heart disease, stroke, and lung and oral cancers. But many Canadians may not realize that, because the harmful chemicals in tobacco products pass through the oral cavity, their effects are seen first-hand by dental hygienists. "Tobacco use not only leads to staining of the teeth and bad breath, but it can also cause dry mouth and mouth sores, and alter taste and smell, which can reduce overall quality of life," explains Tiffany Ludwicki, president of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA). "We also know that nicotine—found in cigarettes, other tobacco products, and vaping devices—acts as a vasoconstrictor, reducing blood flow to the gums," adds Ludwicki. "As a result, users of those products have an increased risk of gingival disease and tooth loss."

Dental hygienists are essential primary health care providers who specialize in identifying and preventing oral health problems and diseases. At every dental hygiene appointment, they examine your mouth, head, and neck, provide oral cancer screenings, and offer oral hygiene instructions and behaviour modification strategies to promote healthy living. "Dental hygienists play a critical role in screening for oral cancers, making referrals when necessary, and in educating all Canadians on the importance of maintaining a nicotine-free lifestyle."

By encouraging healthy life choices and working with clients to develop a good oral care plan, dental hygienists help to ensure optimal overall health throughout the lifespan. "Educating clients about the harmful effects of tobacco can be a powerful motivator for change and may ultimately save lives," says Ludwicki. Visit your dental hygienist today to learn more about the connections between tobacco and oral health. Download and share CDHA's new tobacco fact sheets, available in English and French at [www.dentalhygienecanada.ca/tobacco](http://www.dentalhygienecanada.ca/tobacco), to protect everyone's health for tomorrow.

CDHA is the collective national voice of 30,219 dental hygienists in Canada, directly representing 20,000 individual members, including students. Since 1963, CDHA has worked to advance the

profession and promote the importance of oral health. Dental hygiene is the sixth largest regulated health profession in Canada with professionals working in a variety of settings, including independent dental hygiene practice, with people of all ages, addressing issues related to oral health. For more information on oral health, visit [www.dentalhygienecanada.ca](http://www.dentalhygienecanada.ca).

- 30 -

Angie D'Aoust, Director of Marketing and Communications  
1-800-267-5235 ext. 134, or by email [adaoust@cdha.ca](mailto:adaoust@cdha.ca)

<https://linktr.ee/thecdha>



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