

# Preventive Oral Care for Seniors



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

By 2031, one in four Canadians will be over age 65, with many seniors retaining most, if not all, of their natural teeth.



By 2031, it is expected that one quarter of Canada's population will be over age 65—almost double the proportion today. Canadians' life expectancy is increasing, with men expected to live to 80 and women expected to live to 84. As our population ages, it is increasingly important to add quality of life and not just duration to the years Canadians are living. Among seniors, many of whom are now keeping most, if not all of their natural teeth, oral health care services are now required for many more years than in the past. Even those with dentures and implants still require access to preventive and therapeutic oral care.

Statistics indicate that Canadians between the ages of 60 and 79 are 40% less likely to have private dental insurance compared to the general population. As a result, older Canadians are often infrequent users of oral care services. The need for good oral health continues as a person ages, becomes chronically ill or moves to a long-term care residence. Many older adults, especially those who rely on others for care, have poor oral hygiene and high rates of untreated oral disease. These preventable oral diseases frequently result in more costly emergency procedures and are associated with more serious health complications. Fortunately, daily mouth care can improve both oral and overall health.

## WHAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN DO

### LONG-TERM CARE (LTC) AND HOMECARE GUIDELINES FOR DAILY ORAL HEALTH CARE

1. CDHA recommends that the federal government develop long-term care (LTC) and homecare guidelines for daily oral health care as well as regular professional preventive care, in partnership with provincial governments, oral care professionals, and key stakeholders.
2. Additionally, we would like the government to consider incentivizing the adoption of these oral care guidelines for seniors once developed. The federal government can provide additional transfer funding to those provinces and territories that implement the LTC guidelines.

### SUPPORT ORAL CARE FOR LOW-INCOME SENIORS

1. The federal government can take needed action to incentivize provinces and territories to develop preventive oral care supports for low-income seniors. Provinces that establish and deliver oral care supports for low-income seniors would receive additional transfer funding from the federal government to support these initiatives.

Learn more: [cdha.ca/oralhealthforseniors](https://cdha.ca/oralhealthforseniors)