



# Healing and Oral-Systemic Health

# Webinar tips



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# Today's presenters



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# Agenda

- Introduction to oral health
- Oral health and whole-body health
- Common dental conditions
  - Tooth decay
  - Gum disease
  - Oral cancer



# Why oral health matters

- **Oral health is more than just a healthy smile — it impacts overall well-being.**
- **Members who engage in good oral care behaviors reported improved oral and/or overall health.**
- **Good oral care includes:**
  - Going to the dentist
  - Brushing teeth twice a day for two minutes
  - Flossing (interdental cleaning or water flossing daily)
  - Healthy foods and water
  - Physical activity to manage inflammation
  - Sleep
  - Avoiding harmful substances



Sources: Boyd, L. D., Mallonee, L. F., Wyche, C. J., & Wilkins, E. M. (2021). *Wilkins' clinical practice of the dental hygienist*. Jones & Bartlett Learning.

# The mouth as a gateway



## Oral health is whole-body health

- Cardiovascular health
- Diabetes connection
- Manage bacterial shift in pregnancy
- Respiratory health
- Cognitive health
- Nutrition and digestion
- Immune system and inflammation
- Mental health and well-being



Sources: Barranca-Enríquez A, Romo-González T. Your health is in your mouth: A comprehensive view to promote general wellness. *Front Oral Health*. 2022 Sep 14;3:971223. doi: 10.3389/froh.2022.971223. PMID: 36186536; PMCID: PMC9515542.

# Time for self care includes oral care



# The art and science of oral health – and practicing healthy behaviors



# Oral hygiene facts



# Setting boundaries for periodontal

- Healthy gums do not bleed with good oral care.
- Bleeding gums are a sign of gingival inflammation.

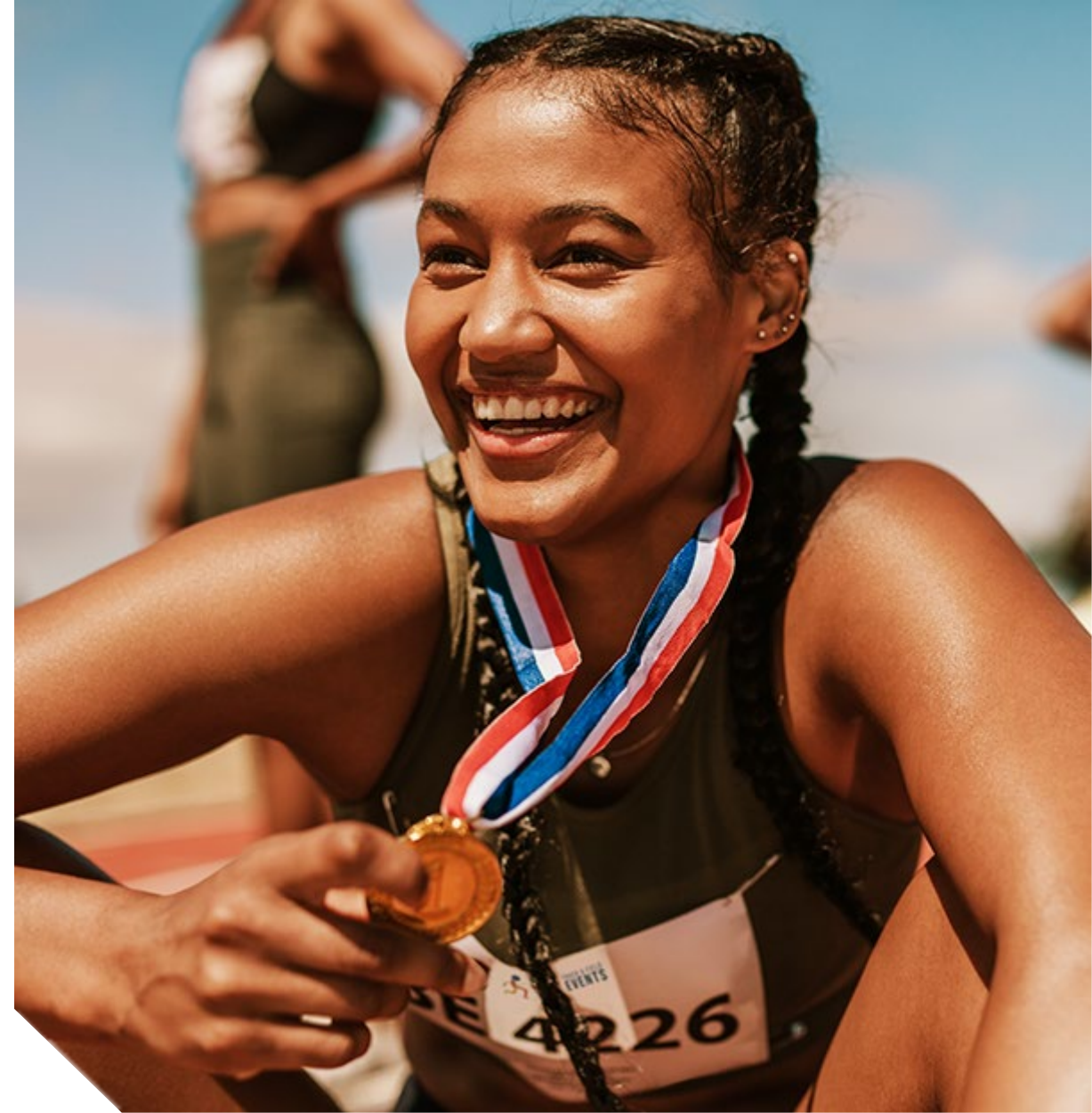


Sources: [What is Gingivitis? Symptoms, Causes, and Treatments - Oral-B](#)

Boyd, L. D., Mallonee, L. F., Wyche, C. J., & Wilkins, E. M. (2021). *Wilkins' clinical practice of the dental hygienist*. Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Zini A, Mazor S, Timm H, Barker ML, Grender JM, Gerlach RW, Biesbrock AR. Effects of an oral hygiene regimen on progression of gingivitis/early periodontitis: A randomized controlled trial. *Can J Dent Hyg*. 2021 Jun 1;55(2):85-94. PMID: 34221032; PMCID: PMC8219070.

# Strengths-based perspective



# Oral health behaviors

## GINGIVITIS AND PERIODONTITIS

Gingivitis is inflammation in the gums in response to the accumulation of biofilm (plaque) along the tooth near the gums.



### Self-screening tips

Gingivitis shows itself through inflammation and bleeding gums. To identify gingivitis, floss between each tooth. Then, observe the areas between the teeth for ten seconds. Look for any redness or bleeding. Healthy gums do not bleed with good oral care.

### Preventing gingivitis, periodontitis, and oral cancer.

- + Floss daily and brush your teeth twice a day, or as directed by your dental care team
- + Eat healthy, low-fat, low-sugar foods, including fruits and vegetables
- + Schedule professional dental cleanings to remove local irritants (mineralized bacteria)
- + Don't use tobacco products and limit or cease alcohol consumption for better health
- + Exercise to stay well and prevent inflammation (and obesity) by moving for 30 minutes five times a week

- + Wear lip protection with sunscreen
- + Talk with your dentist about repeated biting or chewing on tissue
- + Talk with your health care provider about the HPV vaccination for you and your children (approved for up to age 45 by the FDA)

Deng K, Pelekos G, Jin L, Tonetti MS. Gingival bleeding on brushing as a sentinel sign of gingival inflammation: A diagnostic accuracy trial for the discrimination of dental health and disease. *J Clin Periodontol*. 2021;48(12):1537-1548. doi:10.1111/jcpe.13545

Rumgay H, Murphy N, Ferrari P, Soerjomataram I. Alcohol and Cancer: Epidemiology and Biological Mechanisms. *Nutrients*. 2021 Sep 11;13(9):3173. doi: 10.3390/nu13093173. PMID: 34579050; PMCID: PMC8470184.

Nwizu N, Wactawski-Wende J, Genco RJ. Periodontal disease and cancer: Epidemiologic studies and possible mechanisms. *Periodontol 2000*. 2020 Jun;83(1):213-233. doi: 10.1111/prd.12329. PMID: 32385885; PMCID: PMC7328760.

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# Oral health in pregnancy

- Visiting the dentist
- What to do when you experience morning sickness
- Tips for good oral care
  - Brushing teeth and flossing

## Now you're brushing for two



**WHEN YOU'RE PREGNANT  
YOU MAY BE MORE PRONE TO  
GUM DISEASE  
AND CAVITIES**



After your baby is born, you could pass the bacteria that contributes to cavities from your mouth to hers.



**THAT'S WHY  
EVERY PREGNANT WOMAN  
NEEDS TO GET A  
DENTAL CHECK-UP**



**MAKE YOUR APPOINTMENT  
BEFORE THE BABY COMES**



**ONCE SHE COMES,  
WE'RE GUESSING YOU'LL  
BE PRETTY BUSY**



Tips to keep your mouth healthy



**IF YOU HAVE  
MORNING  
SICKNESS,  
RINSE YOUR MOUTH WITH  
ONE TSP OF BAKING SODA  
IN A GLASS OF WATER  
AFTER YOU GET SICK.**



**BE SURE TO  
BRUSH TWICE A DAY  
AND FLOSS DAILY**

# Pregnancy and the oral microbiome



# Maintaining oral health may help heart health

Sources: [Oral Health | American Heart Association](#)

Philip N, Tamimi F, Al-Sheebani A, Almuzafar A, Shi Z. The effect of self-reported flossing behavior on cardiovascular disease events and mortality: Findings from the 2009-2016 National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys. J Am Dent Assoc. 2025 Jan;156(1):17-27.e3. doi: 10.1016/j.adaj.2024.09.017. Epub 2024 Nov 8. PMID: 39520447.



# Practicing oral care may help lower blood sugar

Learn more at  
<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/complications/index.html>



# Oral care – preventing respiratory diseases



Sources: [Oral hygiene to fight pneumonia](#)  
[Oral Health in Healthcare Settings to Prevent Pneumonia Toolkit | HAIs | CDC](#)

## Kids oral care includes toothbrushing, flossing, healthy foods and visiting the dentist













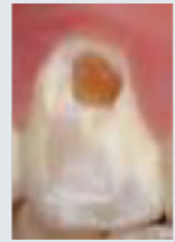
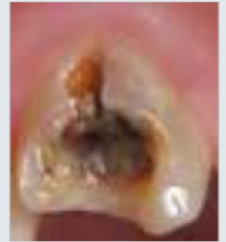




- Schedule an in-network dental visit, or search for an in-network provider at [geha.com/FindCare](https://geha.com/FindCare)



**Take a walk  
for your smile  
– and keep on  
brushing and  
flossing**

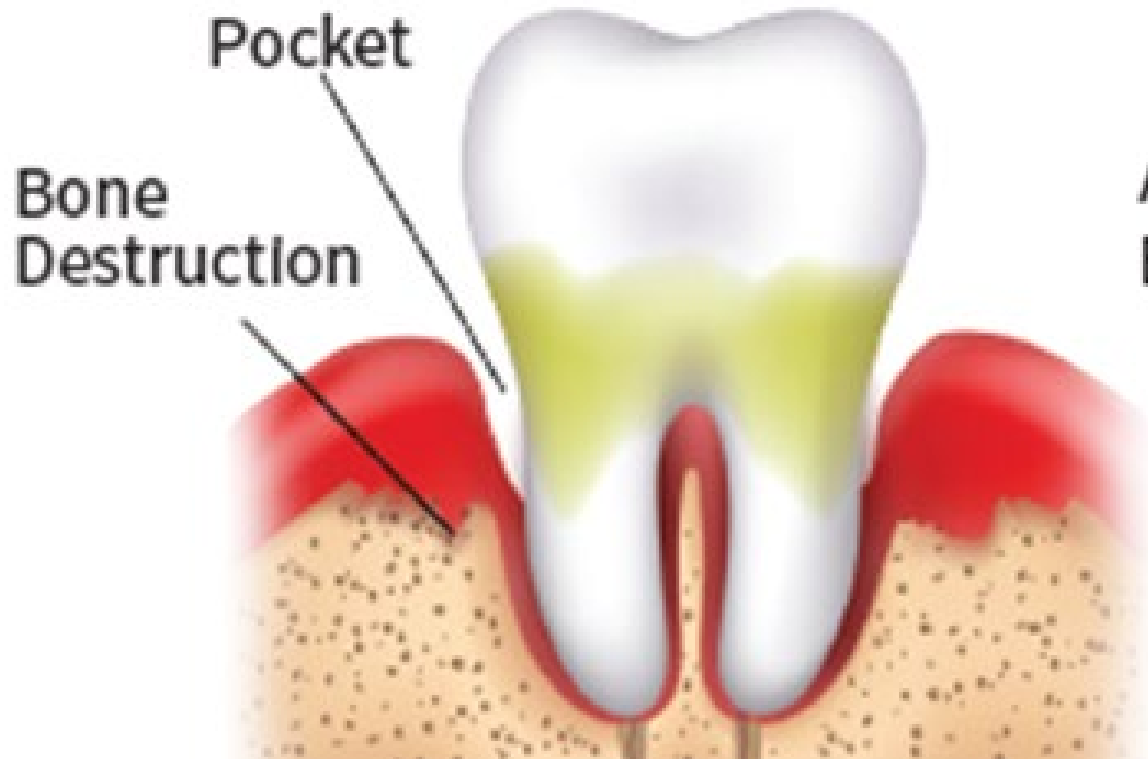


# American Dental Association Caries Classification System.

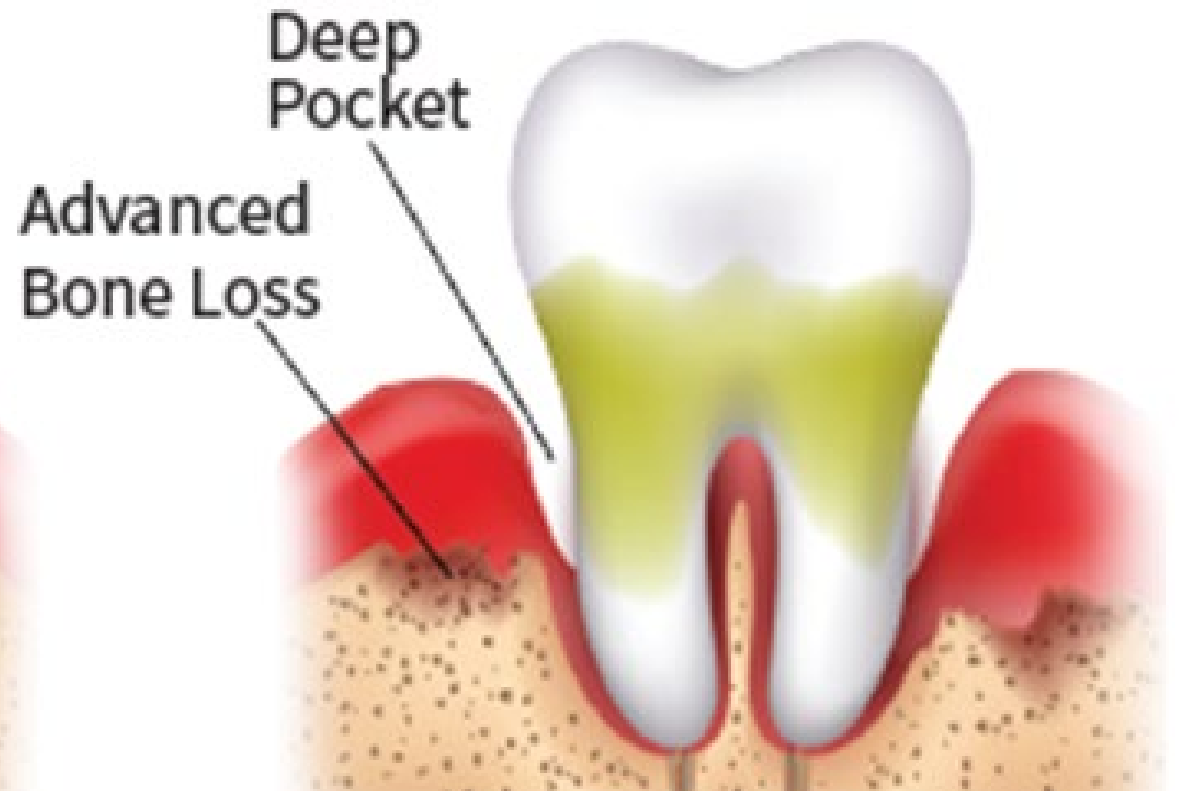
AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION CARIES CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM				
	Sound	Initial	Moderate	Advanced
<b>Clinical Presentation</b>	No clinically detectable lesion. Dental hard tissue appears normal in color, translucency, and gloss.	Earliest clinically detectable lesion compatible with mild demineralization. Lesion limited to enamel or to shallow demineralization of cementum/dentin. Mildest forms are detectable only after drying. When established and active, lesions may be white or brown and enamel has lost its normal gloss.	Visible signs of enamel breakdown or signs the dentin is moderately demineralized.	Enamel is fully cavitated and dentin is exposed. Dentin lesion is deeply/severely demineralized.
<b>Other Labels</b>	No surface change or adequately restored	Visually noncavitated	Established, early cavitated, shallow cavitation, microcavitation	Spread/disseminated, late cavitated, deep cavitation
<b>Infected Dentin</b>	None	Unlikely	Possible	Present
<b>Appearance of Occlusal Surfaces (Pit and Fissure)*</b>		 	 	 
<b>Accessible Smooth Surfaces, Including Cervical and Root†</b>		 	 	 
<b>Radiographic Presentation of the Approximal Surface‡</b>		   E1 <sup>§</sup> E2 <sup>§</sup> D1 <sup>§</sup> Radiolucency may extend to the dentinoenamel junction or	Sources: In 2015 as an author of the following publication with the PEARL Network I was granted permission to publish this table – This is the table from a paper I was an author on. Thompson VP, Schenkel AB, Penugonda B, Wolff MS, Zeller GG, Wu H, Vena D, Grill AC, Curro FA. A pilot study of dentists' assessment of caries detection and staging systems applied to early caries: PEARL Network findings. Gen Dent. 2016 May-Jun;64(3):20-7. PMID: 27148652.	

# Gum disease(s)

## Periodontitis



## Advanced Periodontitis



# Oral cancer

Oral cancer is found in the mouth and pharynx (the area between the nose and mouth), at the back of the tongue, soft palate (roof of the mouth), side and back walls of the throat and tonsils.

Monthly self-screening steps for early detection:

- Remove any dentures or oral appliances
- Starting from the exterior, check for any swelling, pain or tenderness on your face, jaw and both sides of your neck, including your lymph nodes
- Look for any swelling or texture changes in the lips
- Hold each cheek and look for any color change, soreness or growth. Do the same for your gums.
- Tilt backward with your mouth open to inspect the roof of your mouth
- Stick out your tongue and raise it to the roof of your mouth to inspect the tissues underneath it. Look for red or white patches, sores that appear to have been there a while or anything abnormal.
- If you have any concerns, talk to your health care team, especially if you have symptoms that don't go away in a few weeks

Sources: [Oral Cancer Self Exam](#)

# Questions?



# G.E.H.A member resources



## Elevate and Elevate Plus plans

- G.E.H.A Well-being Platform
- Learn more at [geha.com/WellnessPays](https://geha.com/WellnessPays)



## High, Standard, and HDHP plans

- G.E.H.A Well-being Platform
- Learn more at [geha.com/HealthRewards](https://geha.com/HealthRewards)



## All G.E.H.A plans

- Healthy recipes and health and wellness articles
- Learn more at [geha.com/Blog](https://geha.com/Blog)



G.E.H.A website for benefit information [geha.com](https://geha.com)



# More questions?



Schedule a one-on-one  
with a G.E.H.A FedViser  
benefits expert at  
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**Scan the QR code to  
schedule a one-on-one**

# Chat with us



For more information

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Q&A chat will go on through  
1 p.m. Eastern time

Scan the QR code to  
register for future events



This is a brief description of the features of Government Employees Health Association, Inc.'s health plans. Before making a final decision, please read the G.E.H.A Federal brochures which are available at [geha.com/PlanBrochure](https://geha.com/PlanBrochure). All benefits are subject to the definitions, limitations and exclusions set forth in the Federal brochures.

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# Thank you!

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