**Resources to Help Maintain Good Oral Health**

Good oral hygiene, a healthy lifestyle, and regular dental check-ups are essential steps to a healthy mouth. While it can be difficult to access typical health care settings, it can be even more challenging to access oral health care. Dental and oral procedures should not be delayed or avoided due to the inability to pay. The following list provides options to help overcome barriers to accessing and paying for dental and oral health care.

* **Aging Network** – The aging and disability networks are made up of local, state, and national organizations and committed advocates working to support older adults and people with disabilities. The network includes many programs and services that are offered at locations around your community, such as senior centers, congregate meal sites, and community centers. Specifically, your local Area Agency on Aging (AAAs) may partner with dental schools, faith-based organizations, and others to help provide dental care for older adults in need. They may offer community outreach, like free dental days, or provide transportation to and from care sites. Visit the [Eldercare Locator website](https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx) or call 1-800-677-1116 to find your local AAA.
* **Dental Schools** – Dental schools can be a good source of quality, low-cost dental care. Most schools have clinics where dental students gain experience by providing care to patients for a reduced fee. Experienced, licensed dentists closely supervise the students. Contact a [dental school](https://www.ada.org/en/coda/find-a-program) in your area for more information.
* **Dental Hygiene Schools** – Dental hygiene schools may also offer supervised, low-cost preventive dental care from students training to be dental hygienists. To locate dental hygiene schools, go to the [American Dental Hygienists’ Association website](https://www.adha.org/).
* **Community Health Clinics (CHCs)** – The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funds CHCs that care for older adults when they cannot pay for health care services on their own. The majority of CHCs provide dental services. Federally funded health centers offer oral health care and can scale payment based on an individual’s income. Locate a [health center](https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/) in your area.
* **Faith-Based Community Organization** – Some faith-based organizations also provide access to health and dental care for those in need. One example is [Mission of Mercy](https://www.amissionofmercy.org/about-us/), an independent nonprofit, faith-based community organization that provides free dental care to the uninsured and underinsured in several locations around the country.
* **State and Local Resources** – Your state or local health department may know of programs in your area that offer free or low-cost dental care. Contact a health department office to learn more.
* **Medicare –** Medicare is a federal health insurance program that serves people 65 and older as well as people of any age with disabilities. Medicare only covers dental services related to specific medical conditions or treatments, and it does not cover dentures or most routine care like check-ups, cleanings, or fillings. Visit [Medicare Dental Services](https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/dental-services) or call 1–800–MEDICARE (1–800–633–4227) to learn more.
* **Medicaid** –Medicaid is a state-run program that provides medical benefits – and in some cases dental benefits – to eligible individuals and families. Most states provide limited dental services for adults, while some offer comprehensive services. Visit [Medicaid & You](https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid-and-you/index.html) for more information.
* **Veterans Administration (VA)**– Veteran dental care benefits are based on a number of factors. Dental care is offered to eligible Veterans at over 200 locations around the country, including Alaska and Puerto Rico. You can search for the [VA Dental Clinic](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/) closest to you by city, state, or postal code. In addition, you can review the Veterans Dental Benefits and Eligibility section on the [VA Dentistry](https://www.va.gov/DENTAL/index.asp) homepage to learn more. All Veterans are encouraged to contact their nearest VA to find out if they qualify for dental care benefits.

Resources are available to help overcome barriers to accessing affordable oral health care. Reach out to your preferred local community organizations to see what resources are available in your area. Remember that your overall health is dependent on good oral health.