

Minister of Health



Ministre de la Santé

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K9



June is designated National Seniors Month in Canada. As Minister of Health, I encourage all Canadians to take this opportunity to help seniors enrich their lives – by promoting healthy living and the maintenance of good oral hygiene.

Oral health is important to overall health for people of all ages. There is definitive research which shows the connections between poor oral health and systemic diseases – such as diabetes, regardless of age – and respiratory diseases, particularly among our seniors. Oral cancers are known to be more prevalent in people over the age of 50.

New research is pointing to potential connections between oral health and other systemic conditions. Researchers are still learning about the links between oral health and general health, but in itself, oral disease can cause pain, tooth loss and bad breath. Seniors living in long-term care facilities, as well as some seniors being cared for in their home, are at particular risk of complications from poor oral health because of frailty, poor health and increased dependence on others for personal care. In many cases, oral health problems in residents go undetected until there are acute symptoms, such as pain or infection. In fact, some seniors may have less access to oral care services and dental professionals, often due to lower income or lack of dental insurance.

All Canadians can play an important role in the health of seniors. This National Seniors Month, remind seniors of the importance of good oral hygiene habits and regular dental visits.

Tony Clement  
Minister of Health