



Kentucky Public Health

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Oral Health Equals Overall Health

52 Weeks of Public Health Spotlight: National Children's Dental Month



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FRANKFORT, Ky. (February 21, 2018) - February is National Children's Dental Month. As a part of the 52 Weeks of Public Health campaign, the Department for Public Health (DPH) educators, nurses and oral health specialists are taking time to remind Kentuckians to protect their oral health by improving their overall health.

Many Kentuckians struggle with the basics of oral health: brushing their teeth, flossing, and seeing their dentist at least twice each year. DPH's [Oral Health Program](#) works to help Kentucky's at risk populations with resources to improve access to dental providers, or treatments. The oral health program focuses on improving the oral health staff of all Kentuckians, but primarily concentrates on children, especially school aged children.

Oral health impacts cardiovascular health by reducing systemic inflammation affecting blood vessels. Good periodontal (gums) health can reduce a diabetic's A1c values and dental care can result in better birth outcomes such as optimal birth weight and full-term deliveries. Health professional training curricula now includes health of the oral cavity and its impact on other systems throughout the body.

“With a focus on overall health through the integration of health systems, oral health professionals and medical providers are moving closer to incorporating patient findings and treatment plans with each other making appropriate dental care as a part of a person's overall medical treatment plan, said Dr. Julie McKee, Kentucky Oral Health Program Director.

Meeting patients' care needs through community resources while focusing on prevention is the foundation of Kentucky Public Health. The Public Health Dental Hygiene Program operates in

ten local health departments serving 30 Kentucky counties. While the primary focus of the programs are on preventive dental services such as mouth assessments, cleanings, fluoride treatments and dental sealants, oral health professionals strive to provide their patients with a dental home for regular and comprehensive treatment.