

Barriers to Accessing Dental Care in Niagara

Poor oral health is linked to diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. Access to oral health care should **NOT** be limited to people with private health insurance or who can afford to pay out of pocket. 1,334 adults from all 12 municipalities completed a survey about their dental barriers.

Top barriers to accessing dental care



69% cannot afford dental care

30% procedure not covered by their benefits



57% have no dental benefits

61% rate their dental health as poor or fair

Implications to residents living with these barriers

Dental concerns experienced over the past year:

- 60%** tooth pain
 - 50%** cavities
 - 49%** missing, loose or broken teeth
 - 35%** swelling
 - 22%** abscess (infection)
- (60% of respondents experienced one or more of the above concerns)

How these dental concerns affected their lives:

- 61%** have difficulty eating
- 47%** have low self esteem
- 33%** have difficulty sleeping

Where they go for dental emergencies:

- 29%** do nothing
- 15%** family doctor or walk-in clinic
- 13%** emergency room or urgent care
- 11%** address it on their own

ACTION: Call on the provincial government to expand public oral health programs with prime consideration for low income adults and seniors.