



Protecting Oral Tradition by Promoting Oral Health Among Our Elders



KuNAhúx Gichi-aya'aa Madawaaruxiáash Wakánj Elders



45% of American Indians or Alaska Natives between the ages of 65 and 74 have untreated cavities.

Only 57% of American Indians or Alaska Natives over the age of 65 visited a dentist last year.



Good Oral Health is Essential to Keep Tradition Alive



Avoid tobacco use outside of traditional use. Tobacco and e-cigarette use increases problems with gum disease, cavities, cancer, and tooth loss.



Brush your teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste and floss daily. Choose a toothbrush with soft bristles and a small head to get to those hard to reach areas. Remember to clean dentures daily with cleaners made specifically for dentures.



Get regular dental checkups at least once a year. By the time you feel pain from a cavity, it may be too late to save the tooth.



No matter what age you are, drinking water with fluoride helps prevent tooth decay. Bottled water does not include this protective fluoride.



If your medication causes dry mouth, ask your healthcare provider for a different medication that may not cause this condition. If dry mouth cannot be avoided, drink plenty of water, chew sugarless gum, and avoid recreational tobacco products and alcohol. Your dentist may also be able to recommend a dry mouth rinse or medication.



If you have diabetes, work to maintain control of the disease. This will decrease your risk for other complications, including gum disease. Treating gum disease may also help lower your blood sugar level.