



NEWS RELEASE

Public Health

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Public Health Launches New Oral Health Website

The new SmileSBC website makes it easy to get the information you need to keep you and your family's mouths, teeth and gums healthy.

The San Bernardino County Department of Public Health launched a new website to increase awareness about the importance of oral health. The website is the result of expert input from community partners in the Smile San Bernardino County (Smile SBC) network, including dental and health education professionals.

Included on the Smile SBC website are resources for people looking for oral health information for themselves and their family, such as how to find a dentist that accepts Medi-Cal, when you should take your baby to the dentist for the first time and how to take care of your teeth and gums as you get older. The site is also a great resource for dentists, pediatricians and other health/education partners that need oral health resources for the people they serve. Entities can contact the Smile SBC program to partner and to obtain oral health education materials and tools for their patients and clients.

Poor oral health can have a detrimental effect on people at all life stages, from infancy to older adulthood. Dr. Michael Sequeira, Health Officer for San Bernardino County indicates that, "Good dental and mouth care has been shown to prevent heart infections, lower your risk of cancer and stroke, improve diabetes control, and is linked to overall better health and quality of life." Although dental disease is preventable and otherwise treatable, many people including children, older adults, racial and ethnic minorities, low-income pregnant individuals, people with special health care needs and people living in rural or remote communities struggle to get to the high quality dental care they need. In San Bernardino County, significant oral health disparities in ethnicity and socioeconomic status exist. Additionally:

- Tooth decay is the most common health issue in San Bernardino County, with 3 out of 4 third graders and over half of kindergarten students experiencing tooth decay.
- Student absences due to dental problems cost California school districts almost \$30 million annually.
- Only 1 in 3 pregnant women in San Bernardino County go to the dentist during pregnancy even though it is safe and highly recommended.
- Almost half of all adults in the Inland Empire have lost a tooth to a preventable dental disease.

To learn how to bring your mouth, teeth, and gums back into your overall healthcare routine and how to help your kids, patients, and community do the same, please visit the Smile San Bernardino County website today: <http://www.smilesbc.org>.

