

Oral Health Fact Sheet for Medical Professionals

Children with Hearing Impairment

Hearing loss is the complete or partial loss of ability to hear from one or both ears. Hearing loss may be due to interference with the mechanical reception or amplification of sound to the cochlea involving the ear canal, tympanic membrane, or ear ossicles. Hearing loss may also result from damage to the cochlea and the sensorineural elements (79%) including the auditory nerve and its connections in the brainstem.

Hearing may be impaired from birth or may be acquired. (ICD 9 code 389.0)

Oral Manifestations and Considerations

Oral

- Mouth breathing leading to xerostomia
- Increased risk for dental caries
- Increased risk for periodontal infections.

Oral Side Effects of Commonly Prescribed Medications

- Medication: None

Parent/Caregiver Support and Guidance

- Discourage consumption of cariogenic foods and beverages.
- Prescribe sugar-free medications, if available.
- Recommend preventive measures, such as topical fluoride and sealants.
- Advise the use of fluoridated toothpaste twice daily and support the family in following dental care instructions.
- Instruct caregiver on appropriate protocol following dental trauma (locate/preserve missing tooth and put in cold milk; seek immediate professional care).
- Review safety issues appropriate to the age of the child, such as mouth guards to prevent oral-facial trauma.
- Discuss habits that may harm the child's teeth, such as propping baby bottles, putting child to bed with bottle.
- Refer to dentist any oral developmental abnormalities.

Additional information: [Special Needs Fact Sheets for Providers and Caregivers](#)

Children with Hearing Impairment continued

References

- Champion, J., Holt, R. (2000) Dental care for children and young people who have a hearing impairment. *Br Dent J*, 189(3): 155-59.
- Alsmark SS, García J, Martínez MR, López NE (2007) Med Oral Patol Oral Cir Bucal. How to improve communication with deaf children in the dental clinic. Dec 1;12(8):E576-81.

Additional Resources

- [NIH Institute for Hearing Impaired](#)
- [Special Care: an Oral Health Professionals Guide to Serving Young Children with Special Health Care Needs](#)
- [Bright Futures Oral Health Pocket Guide](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics Oral Health Initiative](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry: 2011–2012 Definitions, Oral Health Policies and Clinical Guidelines](#)
- [MCH Resource Center](#)
- [ASTDD-Special Needs](#)
- [Block Oral Disease, MA](#)
- [NOHIC-NIDCR publications](#)