

# 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

**29%** procedure not covered by their benefits



**53%** have no dental benefits

**62%** rate their dental health as poor or fair

## Implications to residents living with these barriers

### Dental concerns experienced over the past year:

- 55%** tooth pain
- 46%** cavities
- 44%** missing, loose or broken teeth
- 32%** swelling
- 19%** abscess (infection)

(55% of respondents experienced more than one of the above concerns)

### How these dental concerns affected their lives:

- 56%** have difficulty eating
- 42%** have low self esteem
- 30%** have difficulty sleeping

### Where they go for dental emergencies:

- 28%** do nothing
- 13%** family doctor or walk-in clinic
- 12%** emergency room or urgent care
- 10%** 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.