How do adults in California view their oral health?
This fact sheet summarizes select data on self-reported oral health status, attitudes and dental care utilization among California adults as of 2015, by income level, based on an innovative household survey. For methods and sources, visit ADA.org/statefacts. For more information on the ADA Health Policy Institute, visit ADA.org/HPI.

Overall Condition of Mouth and Teeth

1 in 5 low income adults say their mouth and teeth are in poor condition.

Life in General is Less Satisfying Due to Condition of Mouth and Teeth

Appearance of Mouth and Teeth Affects Ability to Interview for a Job
How Often Have You Experienced the Following Problems in the Last 12 Months Due to the Condition of Your Mouth and Teeth?

- **VERY OFTEN**
- **OCASIONALLY**
- **RARELY**
- **NEVER**

### Oral Health and Well-Being in California

#### How Often Have You Experienced the Following Problems in the Last 12 Months Due to the Condition of Your Mouth and Teeth?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dry Mouth</strong></td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Difficulty Biting/Cheewing</strong></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience Pain</strong></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avoid Smiling</strong></td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Embarrassment</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anxiety</strong></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problems Sleeping</strong></td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reduce Social Participation</strong></td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Difficulty with Speech</strong></td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Difficulty Doing Usual Activities</strong></td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Take Days Off</strong></td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Proportions

- **3 in 10 adults** avoid smiling due to the condition of their mouth and teeth.
- **1 in 4 adults** feel embarrassment due to the condition of their mouth and teeth.
- **1 in 5 adults** experience anxiety due to the condition of their mouth and teeth.
Oral Health and Well-Being in California

Problems Due to Condition of Mouth and Teeth, by Household Income

High income adults are most likely to report having problems due to the condition of their mouth and teeth.

The top oral health problem for high income adults is dry mouth.

29% of low income adults avoid smiling due to the condition of their mouth and teeth.

38% of high income adults experience pain due to the condition of their mouth and teeth.

20% of middle income adults feel embarrassment due to the condition of their mouth and teeth.

19% of low income adults reduce participation in social activities due to the condition of their mouth and teeth.
Attitudes Toward Oral Health and Dental Care

- **I value keeping my mouth healthy.**
  - Strongly Agree: 76%
  - Agree: 24%
  - Neutral: 3%
  - Disagree: 22%

- **Regular visits to the dentist will help keep me healthy.**
  - Strongly Agree: 72%
  - Agree: 29%
  - Neutral: 21%
  - Disagree: 23%

- **As I grow old I accept I will lose some of my teeth.**
  - Strongly Agree: 63%
  - Agree: 21%
  - Neutral: 11%
  - Disagree: 4%

- **I need to see the dentist twice a year.**
  - Strongly Agree: 44%
  - Agree: 11%
  - Neutral: 11%
  - Disagree: 5%

- **It is easier to get ahead in life if I have straight, bright teeth.**
  - Strongly Agree: 40%
  - Agree: 44%
  - Neutral: 11%
  - Disagree: 5%

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98% value oral health.

84% feel they need to visit the dentist twice per year.

96% agree regular dental visits keep them healthy.

84% believe straight, bright teeth help you get ahead in life.

I accept I will lose some teeth with age.

76% low income adults

50% high income adults

HPI Health Policy Institute

ADA American Dental Association
Oral Health and Well-Being in California

Reasons for Not Visiting the Dentist More Frequently, Among Those Without a Visit in the Last 12 Months

- **COST**: 62%
- **AFRAID OF DENTIST**: 13%
- **INCONVENIENT LOCATION OR TIME**: 18%
- **TROUBLE FINDING A DENTIST**: 12%
- **NO ORIGINAL TEETH**: 10%
- **NO PERCEIVED NEED**: 10%
- **NO REASON**: 13%
- **OTHER**: 8%

**Household Income**

- **LOW**: 55%
  - Cost: 17%
  - Afraid of Dentist: 24%
  - Inconvenient Location or Time: 22%
  - Trouble Finding a Dentist: 20%
  - No Original Teeth: 17%
  - No Perceived Need: 6%
  - No Reason: 8%

- **MIDDLE**: 61%
  - Cost: 10%
  - Afraid of Dentist: 9%
  - Inconvenient Location or Time: 11%
  - Trouble Finding a Dentist: 21%
  - No Original Teeth: 9%
  - No Perceived Need: 2%
  - No Reason: 7%

- **HIGH**: 19%
  - Cost: 19%
  - Afraid of Dentist: 19%
  - Inconvenient Location or Time: 19%
  - Trouble Finding a Dentist: 19%
  - No Original Teeth: 19%
  - No Perceived Need: 19%
  - No Reason: 2%

- **24%** of low income adults cite inconvenient location or time as a reason not to visit the dentist.
- **21%** of middle income adults cite inconvenient location or time as a reason not to visit the dentist.
- **19%** of high income adults cite no need and no reason for not visiting the dentist.

Health Policy Institute
American Dental Association

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