

## Influence of nutrition on the oral health of elderly persons

### Utjecaj prehrane na oralno zdravlje starijih osoba

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**Introduction:** Many studies have shown that proper consumption of food is important for the quality and health of teeth in addition to preventive measures. That is why nutrition counseling is important from the earliest to old age.

**Goal:** It is important to point out that dental health and proper nutrition are closely related. Nutrition has an important role in overall health, including oral health.

**Methods:** Education and examinations of the oral cavity and providing information about nutrition are essential for the general health of the elderly. Oral health is important for chewing, digestion, speaking, appearance and psychological state of the individual. It is a prerequisite for good chewing function, which has an impact on the choice of food and its nutritional composition. Lack of teeth affects the digestive capacity and nutritional status of the individual. Chewing also helps in the utilization of all other types of food, since the digestive enzymes only work on the surface of the food particles. The activity of the oral cavity stimulates the flow of saliva. Microorganisms are mechanically removed by chewing. Nutrition is very important for elderly people (over 65). The quality of nutrition depends on the socioeconomic status and culture of the person (eating habits). Many studies have indicated the association of health status = dental status with the intake and selection of nutrients. Proper nutrition for maintaining healthy teeth is based on minerals (calcium, phosphorus, iron, magnesium, fluoride - 85% in bones and teeth), vitamins (A, B, C, D), and proteins of animal and plant origin. Calcium is an important part of everyone's diet, and it is especially important in old age to prevent bone loss or osteoporosis. Osteoporosis can occur in the jawbone and if it does, it can lead to tooth loss.

**Conclusion:** A poor diet can cause difficulties for the immune system to fight infection, especially if the diet lacks important nutrients. Also, medications can affect the taste of food, food preferences and appetite. Insufficient nutrition in the oral cavity is mostly manifested by changes in the periodontium and oral mucosa. Preventive measures and food consumption rules have a significant role in controlling the quality and health of teeth. That is why it is important to promote and advise on the importance of nutrition for oral health from the youngest to the elderly.