



SADA
THE SOUTH AFRICAN
DENTAL ASSOCIATION

MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WORLD ORAL HEALTH DAY 2024 - A HAPPY MOUTH IS A HAPPY BODY

Johannesburg, 13 March 2024 On the 20 March of every year, the World Dental Federation (FDI), asks the world to unite to help reduce the burden of oral diseases, which affect individuals, health systems and economies everywhere. World Oral Health Day aims to empower people with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to secure good oral health. This year, the World Dental Federation (FDI) unveiled the three-year theme (2024 – 2026), "A HAPPY MOUTH IS... A HAPPY BODY." for World Oral Health Day (WOHD). The theme aims at motivating people to value and take care of their mouths and protect their general health and well-being by doing so.

Oral health is multi-faceted and includes the ability to speak, smile, smell, taste, touch, chew, swallow and convey a range of emotions through facial expressions with confidence and without pain, discomfort and disease of the craniofacial complex.¹

Oral diseases, such as tooth decay, gingivitis and periodontal disease (gum disease), are widespread and preventable. Through proper self-care and regular dental check-ups, together with managing risk factors, good oral health and general health can be secured. Oral diseases share the same determinants and risk factors as the main non-communicable diseases (NCDs) comprising heart disease, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, dementia, and stroke.

Oral diseases affect 3.5 billion people globally, equating to roughly 1 billion more cases than all five major non-communicable diseases (cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, cancers, and mental disorders) put together. Around 75% of people suffering from oral diseases live in low- and middle-income countries.

In Gauteng, over 60% of our primary school children suffer from dental caries. More concerning is that over 80% of these children remain untreated for the disease due to the overburdened oral health system and poor health-seeking behaviours. In terms of the elderly residing in Johannesburg, the prevalence of missing teeth is 85% and approximately 33% of these people are completely edentulous and in need of dentures to restore their oral health function. Periodontal disease is among the six most prevalent NCDs world-wide affecting almost 10% of the global population. Severe forms of periodontal disease are the major cause of tooth loss in adults. Their prevention may have an impact that goes beyond the oral cavity.

Oral diseases are a major health concern for many countries and negatively impact people throughout their lives. Oral diseases lead to pain and discomfort, social isolation and loss of self-confidence, and they are often linked to other serious health issues. And yet, there is no reason to suffer: most oral health conditions are largely preventable and can be treated in their early stages.

Dr Makwakwa, South African Dental Association's FDI National Liaison Officer believes that it is never too early or too late to start looking after your oral health. Prevention, early detection, and treatment

are key to ensuring the best oral health outcomes for societies. It is also essential in reducing the risk for oral diseases and associated general health complications. Hence the FDI theme 'A HAPPY MOUTH IS A HAPPY BODY'.



Prepared by Dr Khanyi Makwakwa, FDI Liaison: South Africa

1. Glick M, Williams DM, Kleinman DV, et al. A new definition for oral health developed by the FDI World Dental Federation opens the door to a universal definition of oral health. *Journal of public health dentistry* 2017;77(1):3-5.

Ends

Note to Editors:

South African Health Professionals Collaboration members:

- South African Private Practitioners Forum (SAPPF)
- South African Medical Association (SAMA)
- Federation of South African Surgeons (FoSAS)
- South African Dental Association (SADA)
- South African Society of Anaesthesiologists (SASA)
- Unity Forum of Family Practitioners (UFFP)
- South African Orthopaedic Association (SAOA)
- South African Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (SASOG)
- Radiological Society of South Africa (RSSA)

The NCOP plenary will vote on the NHI Bill on Wednesday, 29 November 2023.

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About SADA:

The South African Dental Association (SADA) is the peak national body for the dental profession in South Africa representing the large majority of active registered dentists, both in the public and private sectors in South Africa. It is a non-profit professional association with a voluntary membership organisation represented by a total of 11 branches, one in every province of the Republic of South Africa, with Gauteng and Eastern Cape provinces having two branches each. The Association represents the interests of both the oral health profession and its members in South Africa.

The Association is committed and engaged in processes relating to setting industry standards and formulating policies. Learn more about SADA at <https://www.sada.co.za>