

## Key Questions to Consider

- 1 What's important to you for your dental care?
- 2 How much should I budget for dental care now and in the future?
- 3 Do I have insurance for dental care and if so, what does it cover?
- 4 Who else knows my dental insurance information?
- 5 Who else knows who my dentist is?
- 6 Does my personal care substitute decision-maker know what I want if I am no longer able to make dental decisions for myself?

## Who We Are

Archer Dental is a Toronto-based dental clinic with the mission of advancing dental care in our changing world .

The Canadian Centre for Elder Law is a non-partisan, non-profit law reform institute focused on issues related to law and aging.

\* Taylor, G. W., Loesche, W. J. and Terpenning, M. S. Impact of Oral Diseases on Systemic Health in the Elderly: Diabetes Mellitus and Aspiration Pneumonia. Journal of Public Health Dentistry, 2000.

\*\* Lux J, Lavigne S. Your mouth – portal to your body: CDHA position paper on the links between oral health and general health. Part II. Probe. 2004.



Advancing Dental Care in our changing world

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# D.E.A.R.

DENTAL ELDER ABUSE RESPONSE



## Take the bite out of elder abuse

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Oral Health is ESSENTIAL to general health and quality of life. It is a state of being free from mouth and facial pain, oral and throat cancer, oral infection and sores, periodontal (gum) disease, tooth decay, tooth loss, and other diseases and disorders that prevent a person's capacity in biting, chewing, smiling, speaking, and psycho-social well-being.

Oral health is important to the overall well-being of older adults. Preventative dental care can head off more expensive dental work and help prevent severe diseases. Unfortunately, dental costs are primarily out-of-pocket for those over 65, and when financially strapped, they may forego regular visits to the dentist. This decision to "do without" can have serious consequences because the elderly suffer a disproportionate amount of oral disease.

### Did you know that:

Thousands of seniors are at risk of preventable death each year because of oral hygiene neglect.

Most people have never thought about who would be their substitute decision-maker for dental care issues if they become incapable.

Many seniors are not able to get the dental care that they need and this can cause diminished quality of life, illness and even death.

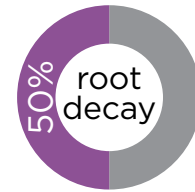
People age 65 and over are the least likely age group to use dental services (second only to preschool children).

### The Facts:

Dental elder abuse and neglect occurs when a person or system fails to provide necessary dental care for an older adult.



Nearly 1/3 of older adults have untreated tooth decay (dental caries).



50% of those over 75 years of age have root decay. Untreated caries can progress to the pulp (nerve) of the tooth, causing pain and dental abscess, which may lead to more serious infections, such as bacteremia and septicemia.



Nearly 1/4 of 65-74 year olds have severe periodontal (gum) disease. This is a bacterial infection and is associated with chronic disease and severe health events including:

#### DIABETES LINK:

People with diabetes are 15x more likely than people without diabetes to lose their teeth\*.

#### RESPIRATORY LINK:

Pneumonia is the #1 killer in long term care homes. Mouth bacteria can be aspirated into the lungs. Oral disease can increase the risk for pneumonia 3-6 x.\*

#### HEART AND STROKE LINK:

Periodontal (gum) disease may increase your risk 1-3 x for cardiovascular disease.\*\*

### What's this project all about?

- It's about helping people think about what kind of dental care they want as they age.
- It's about planning for the future around dental health, including how much it's going to cost.
- It's about bringing dentists, patients and their families together to fight dental elder abuse and neglect.

### What does DEAR do?

- Teaches seniors, dentists, caregivers and families to recognize dental elder abuse and neglect issues.
- Develops educational materials and tools on the link between oral health and elder abuse and neglect.
- Forms a network of dentists and people concerned about dental elder abuse and neglect across Canada (Dental Theme Team - <http://www.nicenet.ca>).