

# Smiles for Life

## Geriatric Oral Health Program

### Why is good oral health important for residents in long-term care facilities?

- Geriatric oral health and overall health are closely related.
- Poor oral hygiene is associated with the increased incidences of pneumonias.
- Many medications can cause dry mouth, which increases the risk of dental caries.
- Diabetic glucose control is poorer in the presence of gum disease and gum disease is worse in diabetic patients, especially in those with poor glycemic control.
- Poor oral health is a common cause of weight loss and failure to thrive.

Health-care professionals can play an important role in improving the overall health of their residents by addressing oral health issues.



### What is the Smiles for Life Geriatric Oral Health module?

This training course addresses the vital role health-care professionals can play in promoting the oral health needs of older adults. Health-care professionals will learn how to perform a comprehensive oral assessment, identify and manage common geriatric oral conditions, counsel residents on effective preventive measures and collaborate with dental professionals. Additionally, this training module will address the link between oral and systemic health and review common oral side effects of medications.

### How do I get trained on the Smiles for Life Geriatric Oral Health Program?

This convenient, online training is available at [www.smilesforlifeoralhealth.org](http://www.smilesforlifeoralhealth.org). Click Course 8: Geriatric Oral Health.

### Are credits available for training?

Upon completion of this course, if scoring 80 percent or higher on the post test, you will receive 1.0 nursing contact hour free. A printed certificate of completion is needed for verification of credits. When you have completed the training and the post test, you will be asked if you would like to print the certificate.

Upon completion of the Smiles for Life online curriculum, you are requested to complete the online training completion form and view Smiles for Life guidance, which can be accessed at [www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth/programs.htm](http://www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth/programs.htm).

### Where can I find more information about the Smiles for Life Program?

For more information, visit [www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth/programs.htm](http://www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth/programs.htm).

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For more information about Smiles for Life or geriatric oral health, contact:

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