

Effective strategies to foster collaboration between dental professionals and adolescents for optimal care delivery

Oral health and adolescence^{1,2,3,4,5}



Oral health is an integral part of good overall health and wellbeing

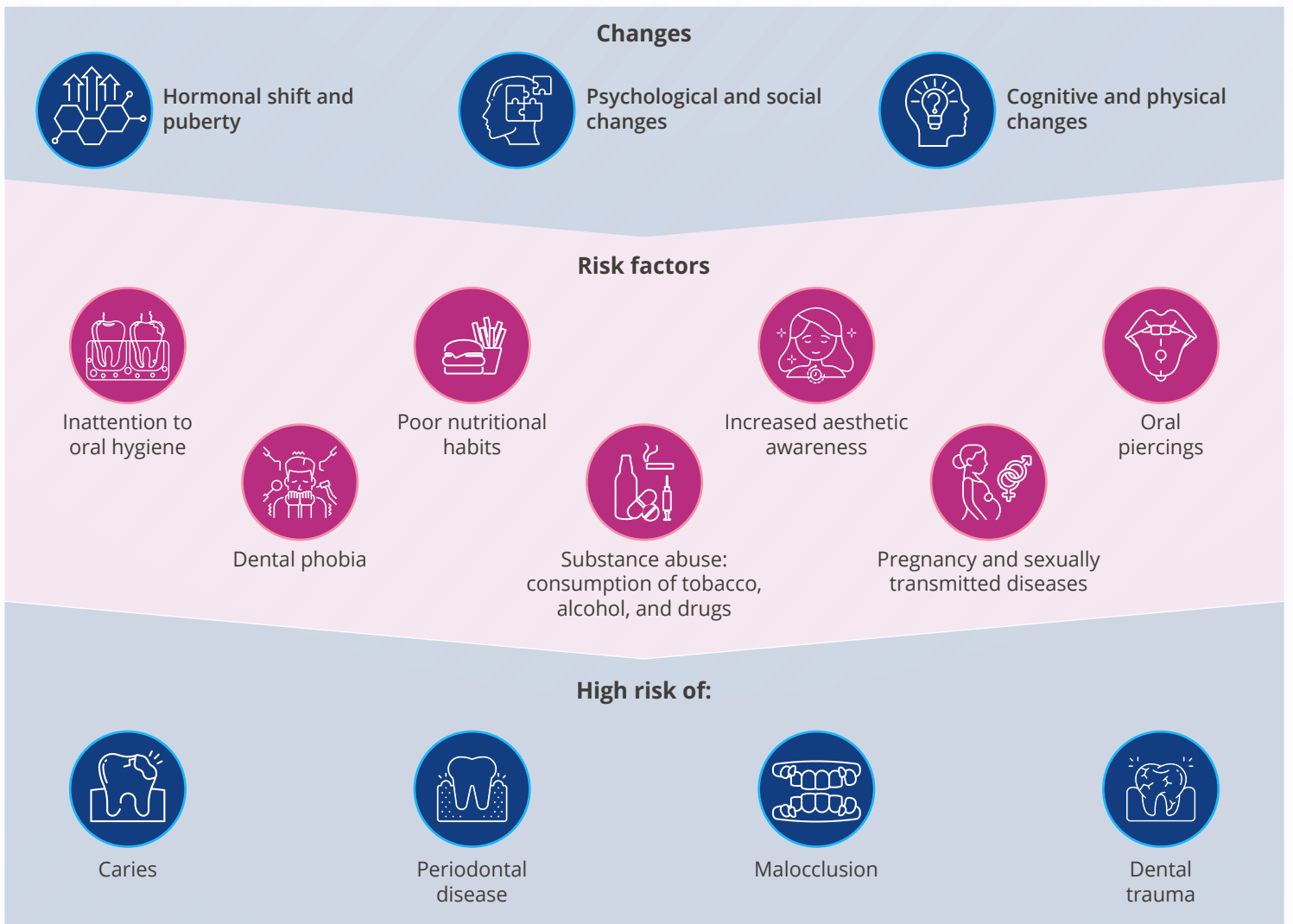


Poor oral health can lead to several illnesses and has been linked to poor diabetes control and coronary artery disease



Adolescence—the critical period of transition from childhood to adulthood, typically encompassing ages 10 to 19 years—is particularly vulnerable to poor oral health

Rapid changes make adolescents vulnerable to various risk factors, including oral health issues^{6,7,8}

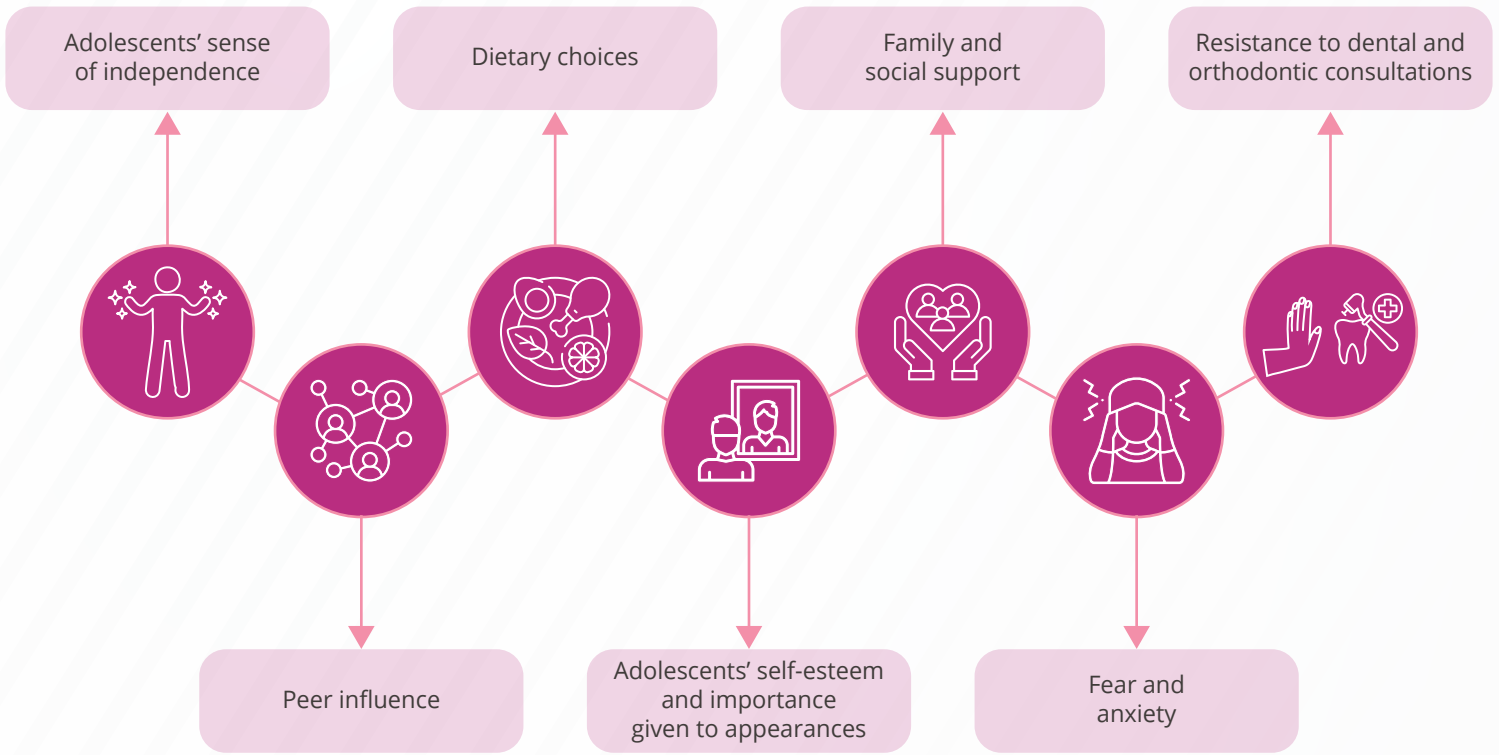


Oral healthcare is the most overlooked and unmet healthcare need in adolescents²

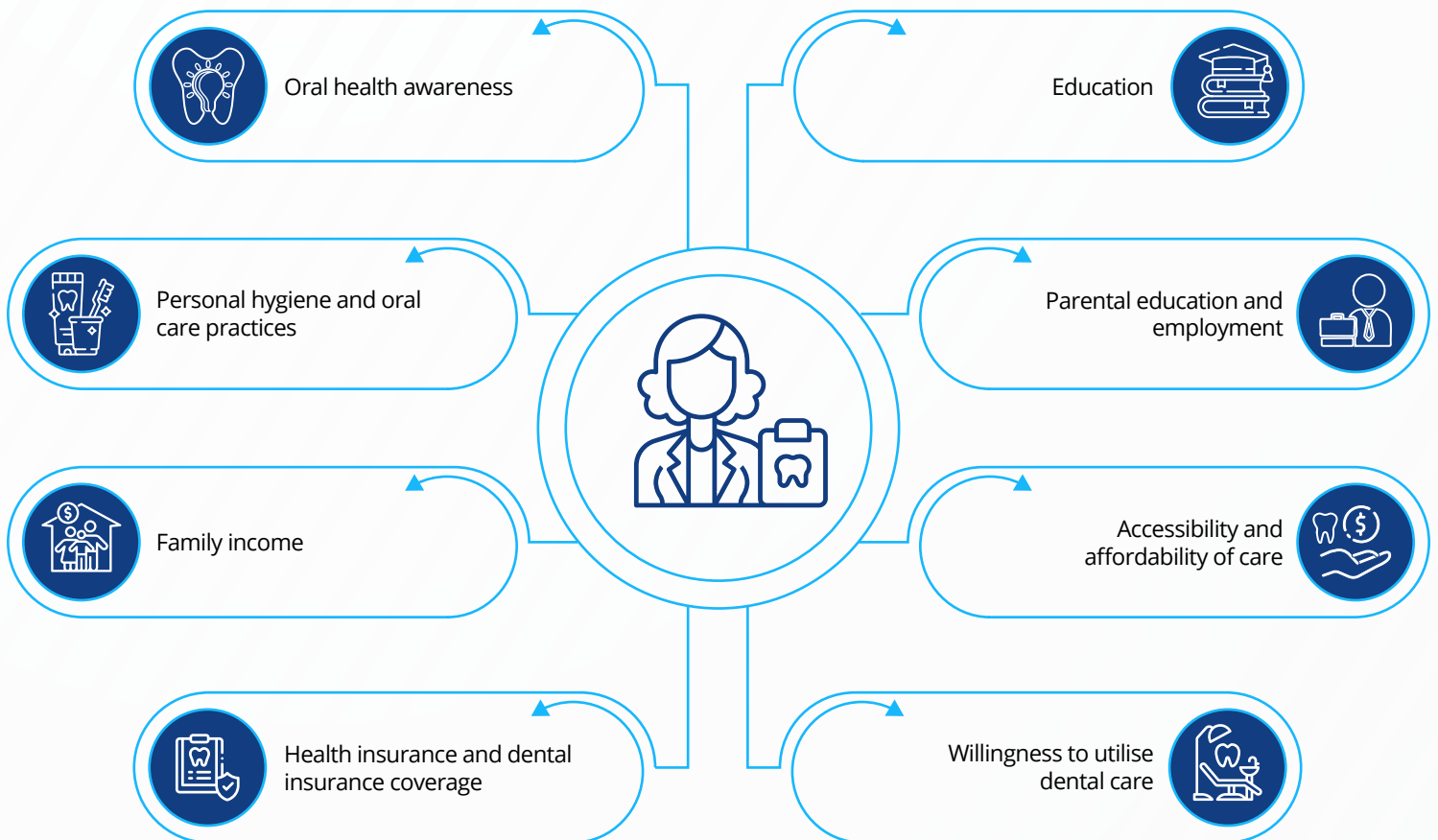


Comprehensive assessment of oral health in adolescents can help address their unique oral health issues²

While addressing oral health concerns in adolescents, dental professionals must consider²:



Factors that influence the use of oral health services by adolescents⁹



Collaboration between dental professionals and adolescent patients and their active involvement in clinical decision-making can foster a sense of empowerment and ownership towards personal oral care⁴



Dental professionals must adopt, train, and use motivational one-on-one interviewing techniques to address oral health behaviour problems among adolescents^{2,6}



Encourage healthy eating habits, advocate reducing energy drinks and soft drinks by suggesting dietary modifications



Counsel on the risks associated with tobacco, alcohol, and drug use and encourage abstinence



Emphasize the benefits of early prevention of caries and other oral complications



Encourage behavioural management and inculcate preventive oral healthcare measures



Advocate the use of protective gear during sports activities



Advise against oral piercings and educate patients on ensuring hygiene of oral jewellery



Suggest the use of dental sealants and fluoride varnishes when necessary; recommend toothpaste with adequate fluoride concentration for adolescents at higher risk of caries



Encourage yearly dental visits



Facilitate smooth transition to adult oral care



Educate on human papillomavirus infection and the importance of early vaccination



Use technological advancements, such as smartphones, applications, and computer games, to improve compliance

Oral and overall health are strongly interconnected⁷

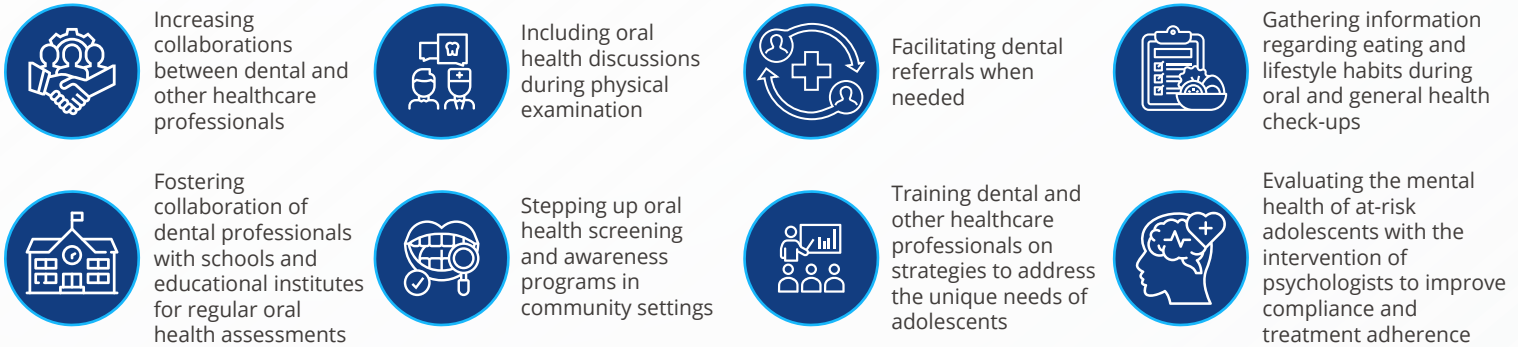


Integration of oral and general adolescent health, and interdisciplinary collaborations can help ensure timely prevention and deliver comprehensive oral care in adolescents^{10,11,12,13}

Successful collaborations usually involve:



Interdisciplinary collaborations to foster optimal care delivery should focus on:



Barriers to integrated oral care¹¹



Key message

A patient-centric approach and integration of oral healthcare in primary clinical settings can help improve the management of oral health in adolescents

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