



Breaking the Silence: Menopause and its effect on oral health

Many women indicate they're unaware of menopause's impact on oral health and need to become more comfortable speaking about it with clinicians, including their dentists.

Menopausal and perimenopausal women 40 and older are eager to **learn** more about the menopause and oral health connection, **hear** from their dentists about how to address their symptoms and **practice** oral care habits to keep their mouth and teeth healthy as they age.

52% of women 40+ indicate they **do not know menopause can affect oral health even when they're not experiencing the typical or common symptoms like hot flashes and night sweats.**

Women 40+ report experiencing changes in their oral health but are not aware of how menopause can cause or impact those changes:



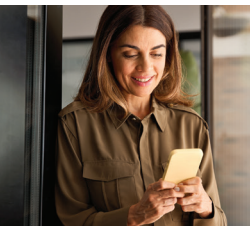
35% say they have experienced a **decline in overall oral health** as they age.



51% say they've experienced a **change in the appearance of their teeth or gums** as they age.



54% either **don't believe or aren't sure** that the **risk of gum disease increases when estrogen levels drop.**



Menopause isn't just impacting health, it's impacting women's daily lives, even at work. Many employed women have missed work in the past 12 months due to menopause symptoms:



Dentists are a resource for **women**

Women 40+ aren't talking about menopause as often as they should despite experiencing changes in oral health and impacts at work:



67% say they have **not discussed the impact of menopause on oral health with anyone.**



18% have **discussed the impact of menopause on oral health with a dentist, dental hygienist or other dental professional.**



40% indicated they feel **uneasy, reluctant or awkward** initiating conversation **about menopause-related oral health issues.**



That said, women want to hear from their dentists:



93% say it would be helpful if they were **provided specific instructions on what they should do regarding their oral health during menopause** at their dental visit.



88% believe it's important for dentists to tell their female patients **what preventative steps they can take ahead of time to maintain good oral health during menopause.**



59% say they would **feel comfortable, open or appreciative about their dentist bringing up menopause-related oral health issues with them.**

Focusing on holistic care: An opportunity for **dentists** to seize the moment

With a clear desire from women to hear from clinicians, **dentists share their insights.**

Dentists understand the connection. Nearly, **83%** of dentists share that **understanding the impact of menopause on oral health would lead to better oral health outcomes** for their patients.

Still, it can feel like an uncomfortable topic for many. **53%** of dentists say they **wouldn't discuss the impact of menopause on oral health with their patients unless their female patients brought up the topic first.**

With that said, more than **4 in 5** dentists indicate that they are **open to having conversations with their female patients** about the impact of menopause on oral health.

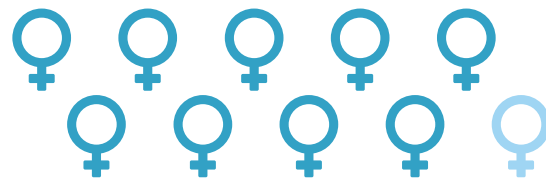


Dentists are eager to learn more: **75%** indicate **training opportunities** for dental or other health professionals that **are focused on oral health during menopause could improve the integration of dental care into the overall health management** of menopausal women.



Engaging in **healthy habits**

Though **57%** of women 40+ say they **typically visit a dentist less often than once every 6 months**, as recommended by the American Dental Association, nearly **9 in 10** women express **having good oral health makes them feel better about aging.**



Once women 40+ surveyed received information about the connection between menopause and oral health, **most appear to be inclined to take action to ensure good oral health in the future.**

After receiving more information about the connection between menopause and oral health, women 40+ indicated a commitment to prioritize their oral health in the future:



87% are more likely to **prioritize taking better care of their gums** during menopause.



82% are more likely to **prioritize scheduling their next dental visit.**

64% view their dental visits as an opportunity to learn more about the menopause/oral health connection.



84% agree that understanding the correlation between hormonal changes during menopause and increased risk of dental problems would have helped them be more proactive about managing their oral health before reaching menopause.

A healthy mouth can also support heart health

Menopause leads to changes throughout the entire body, including a decline in estrogen levels which can lead to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease.

Though 48% of women 40+ aren't aware of this connection, nearly 9 in 10 agree that taking better care of their teeth during menopause can help them reduce their risk of heart disease.

67% have not discussed any of the following connections with their dentist:

- Oral health and heart health
- Menopause and heart health
- Oral health's impact on overall health
- Gum disease and heart disease
- Increased risks of developing gum diseases during menopause



79% of doctors recognize that - while rarely discussed - the connection among menopause, oral health and cardiovascular health is important.

79% of dentists indicate they are open to having conversations with their female patients about the menopause and cardiovascular health connection.

Once learning about the connection between oral health and heart health, more 4 in 5 women say they are more likely to prioritize their next dental visit.



Delta Dental of California offers comprehensive, high-quality oral health care coverage to more than 31 million enrollees.

Learn more about the connection between menopause and oral health at deltadentalins.com

Methodology: Delta Dental of California commissioned Atomik Research to conduct an online survey of 1,500 women 40 years of age or older throughout the United States. In order to qualify for participation all participants must indicate they are going through the following stages of menopause: perimenopause, menopause or post menopause. Participants indicating that they were not sure which stage of menopause they were in or those who indicated they are not yet experiencing one of the three stages of menopause were excused from participation. The margin of error is +/- 2.5 percentage points with a confidence level of 95 percent. Fieldwork took place between July 8 and July 15, 2024.

Delta Dental of California commissioned Atomik Research to conduct an online survey of 102 dentists throughout the United States. The sample consists of dentists who currently see adult patients in their practices. The margin of error is +/- 9.7 percentage points with a confidence level of 95 percent. Fieldwork took place between July 8 and July 17, 2024.

Atomik Research, a part of 4media group, is an independent market research agency.

