

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department

PREVENT • PROMOTE • PROTECT

Oral Health Report 2023

Importance of Oral Health and Early Childhood

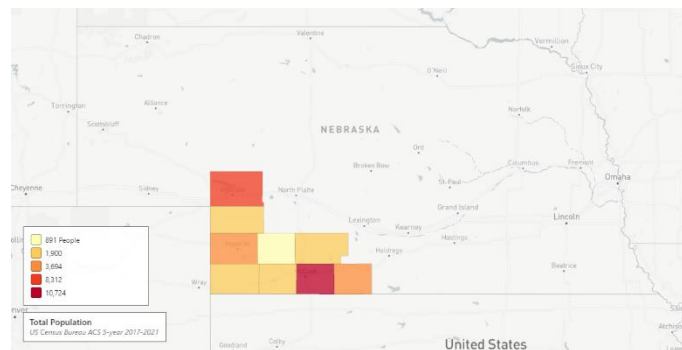
- Oral health impacts the ability to speak, smile, smell, taste, touch, chew, swallow, and convey emotions.
- Poor oral health in children can cause persistent dental pain, inability to chew foods well, embarrassment about discolored and damaged teeth, impaired speech development and learning, and lead to infections.
- Children with oral health problems are more likely to feel worthless and inferior, shy, unhappy, sad, or depressed.

Populations at Risk of Oral Health Problems

- Several distinct populations in Nebraska have been identified as at risk for oral health problems (2016 Nebraska State Oral Health Assessment):
 - Rural communities
 - Low income
 - Hispanic/minority
 - Low education attainment

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department District Profile:

All nine counties in Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department district are classified as **rural**.



Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Keith, Hayes, Hitchcock, Perkins, and Red Willow counties

- Race/ethnicity
 - 9.7% of the population is **racial minority**
 - 6.7% of the population is **Hispanic** (largest minority category)
- Income/Poverty
 - 10.6% of the population lives below **poverty line**
 - 46.1% of households have income **less than \$50,000**
 - 65.3% of **Hispanic** households have income **less than \$50,000**
- Healthcare coverage
 - 13.4% of SWN adults (18-64yrs) reported having **no health coverage**
 - 47.6% SWN adults (18-64) with income **less than \$50,000** report having **no health coverage**
 - In Nebraska statewide, **Hispanic** individuals are nearly **3x** as likely to have **no health coverage**
 - 36.4% of **Nebraskan children** had **inadequate health insurance** (insufficient or gap in coverage) in the last year (2020-2021)

Oral Health Disparities in Adults living in Southwest Nebraska (SWN)

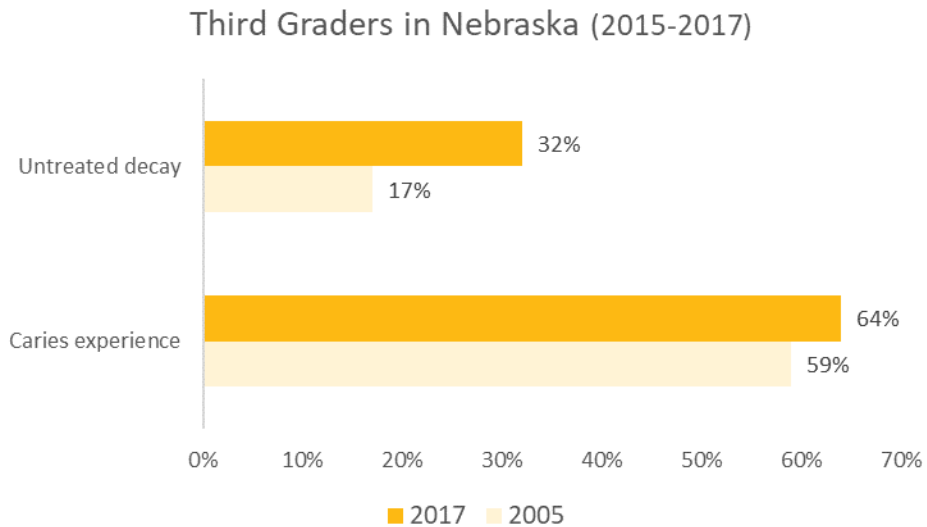
- SWN district has lower rates of dental visits and higher rates of tooth decay in adults than Nebraska statewide
- **58.1% SWN adults** (18+) visited a dentist or dental clinic for any reason in past year (2016, 2018, 2020 combined)
 - 68.2% Nebraska adults
 - 45.4% SWN adults with annual salary less than \$25,000
 - **39.7% SWN** adults with less than a high school degree
- **46.1% SWN adults** (18+) had any permanent teeth extracted due to tooth decay or gum disease (2016, 2018, 2020 combined)
 - 37.2% Nebraska adults
 - 24.7% SWN adults ages 18-44
 - 58.4% SWN adults with annual salary less than \$25,000
 - **24.2% SWN** adults with college degree
- **16.4% SWN adults** 65+ had all permanent teeth extracted due to tooth decay or gum disease (2016, 2018, 2020 combined)
 - 12% Nebraska adults
 - **26.7% SWN** adults with annual salary less than \$25,000
- 28 visits to the ER (annual average) by SWN adults due to tooth pain or dental issues

Children's Oral Health in Nebraska

Nearly 3 in 5 Nebraskan children will have experienced tooth decay before entering kindergarten.

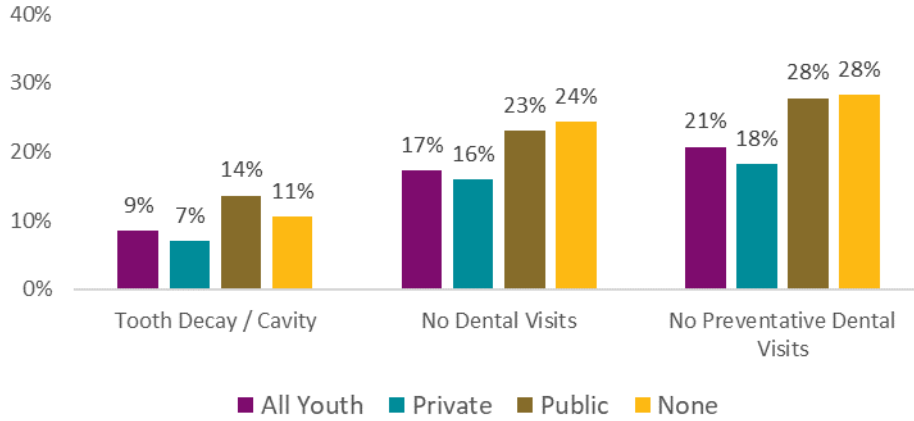


In a study conducted on third graders across Nebraska (2015-2017) shows a 53% increase in tooth decay and a 9% increase in caries experience (oral health problems) since 2005.



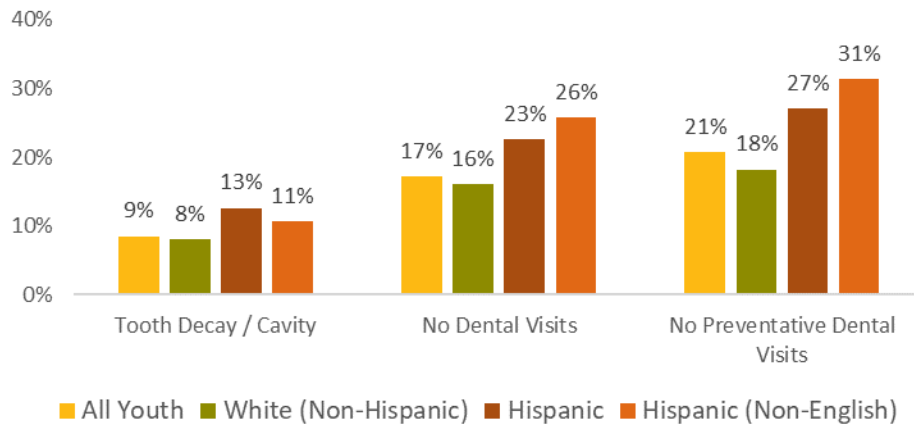
36.4% Nebraska youth (0-17 years) had a gap in and/or inadequate health insurance coverage in the past year.

Nebraska Youth: Lack of Dental Care in the Last Year (2020-2021) - By Health Insurance Type



Nebraskan children with public health insurance (Medicaid, CHIP, etc.) or no health insurance were at greater risk of tooth decay or cavity and less likely to see a dentist.

Nebraska Youth: Lack of Dental Care in the Last Year (2020-2021) - Racial Disparity



The Hispanic population is the largest racial minority group in SWNPHD district. Across Nebraska, Hispanic youth are at higher risk of tooth decay or cavity and are less likely to see a dentist.

Behaviors Impacting Oral Health

Smokeless tobacco and sugary drinks have been shown to have a negative impact on oral health (2016 Nebraska State Oral Health Assessment).

- **SWN Adults (2016-2020)**
 - Summary: Smokeless tobacco use among adults is higher in SWN than Nebraska statewide
 - 8.8% of SWN adults report using smokeless tobacco
 - 5.2% Nebraska adults
 - Adults in Nebraska living in rural areas are 2x as likely to report using smokeless tobacco as adults living in large urban areas
 - 4.3% rural
 - 8.8% large urban
 - 6.3% small urban

- **Students in Nebraska (2021)**
 - Summary: In Nebraska, upper-classmen and LGBTQ-identifying students are more likely to participate in behaviors which negatively impact oral health
 - 2.9% Nebraska students reported currently using smokeless tobacco
 - 3.2% of 11th graders
 - 3.6% of 12th graders
 - **14.7%** (sexual contact with same or both sexes)
 - 0.5% Nebraska students reported using smokeless tobacco frequently (20 or more of the past 30 days)
 - 1% (sexual contact with the opposite sex)
 - 0.5% Nebraska students reported currently using smokeless tobacco daily
 - 0.9% of 12th graders
 - 1% (sexual contact with the opposite sex)
 - 14% students reported drinking a can, bottle, or glass of soda/pop one or more times per day (last 7 days)
 - 18.5% of 12th graders
 - 23.7% who identify as gay/lesbian/bisexual
 - 17.7% (sexual contact with opposite sex only)
 - 13.1% students reported drinking a can, bottle, or glass of sugar-sweetened beverage one or more times per day (last 7 days)
 - 17% of 12th grade
 - 25.2% who identify as gay/lesbian/bisexual
 - 25.2% (sexual contact with opposite sex only)

Sources

- [All data collected](#)
- [2016 Nebraska State Oral Health Assessment](#)
- [Access to Oral Health Care for Children - 2011/12 DHHS data analysis](#)
- ACS 5-year data (2017-2021) for Southwest Nebraska (collected through MySidewalk)
- BRFSS 2020 Adult oral health for SWN and Nebraska (collected from [NE DHHS BRFSS Atlas](#))
- [National Survey of Children's Health](#) 2020-2021 NE statewide data
- [Nebraska YRBS 2021 data](#)
- [NOHSS National Oral Health Surveillance Survey: Child Indicators](#) - 2015-2017 Nebraska school year data
- [Oral Health and learning CDC](#)