



## PROJECT ADAPT- VIRTUAL

Project *ADAPT* (**A**dult **D**ental **A**ccess, **P**revention and **T**reatment) is an initiative focused on providing financial and logistical access to dental care and treatment to the low-income older adult population. Too many adults cannot afford and/or are unable to access this essential health care need. Project *ADAPT* is focused on providing needed education, care and treatment and encouraging preventive care practices and good oral hygiene.

**Why a Virtual Dental Care Program?** Dental health cannot be separated from an individual's overall health—it is crucial. Unfortunately, many people in the United States do not have adequate access to affordable dental preventative care or more extensive oral care treatments.

Access to oral care is directly associated with factors such as: income, race, ethnicity, education level and disabilities.<sup>12</sup> Too many low-resource adults do not receive any significant dental care and suffer from poor overall dental health. Moreover, oral health has been linked to other physical health conditions, such as heart disease and diabetes.<sup>3</sup>



One of our dedicated dentists in PPE—a sign of the times

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*Better dental care leads to improved overall health and better quality of life and wellbeing.*

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These issues are only be exasperated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The groups we currently support and serve are at the greatest health risks due to this virus. However, at the same time, we are hearing from doctors and dentists about the importance of routine dental and medical checkups. By utilizing technology, we are developing and implementing Project *ADAPT* Virtual Hygiene Education webinars that will provide needed dental information to these individuals, particularly during this time of lockdown and isolation. In addition, we are providing tele-dental health visits where the patient “sees” the dentist via a secure video connection. The dentist is able to have an initial check-up with the patient and provide recommendations for care and treatment based on this visit.

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<sup>1</sup> US Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General. Oral health in America: A report of the Surgeon General. Rockville, MD: National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research; 2000.

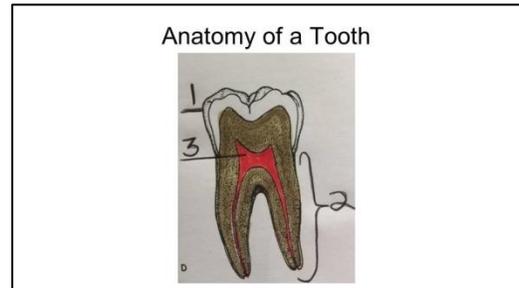
<sup>2</sup> US Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A national call to action to promote oral health, Rockville (MD): National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research; May 2003, p. 1 -53. (NIH Publication; no. 03-5303).

<sup>3</sup> [www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/basics/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/basics/index.html).

## Overall Goal of Our Virtual Project ADAPT Program.

Our ultimate goal for Project ADAPT Virtual is to provide low-resource older adults and people with disabilities access to needed dental care and information, geared specifically for their unique needs. This innovative, virtual program is a direct result of the pandemic and its effect on the groups we serve and support. With this initiative, we hope to bridge the gap between their in-person dental checkups due to COVID-19.

Project ADAPT Virtual Oral Hygiene webinars and tele-dental visits will have a positive impact on the dental health of the vulnerable groups we support, and in turn, on their overall health. We know that these groups have extremely limited access to dental care and treatment, even during “normal” times. During COVID-19 restrictions, access to any oral care has been completely stopped. By providing these virtual oral care educational webinars and tele-dental visits, we are able to provide dental care and information in an easily accessible mode to residents and staff during self-quarantining.



**Why is good oral health especially important to the overall health of older adults?**

In simplest terms, effective regular dental habits like brushing correctly and eating a nutrient dense diet prevent bad bacteria from permanently damaging teeth, gums, and the bone that holds the teeth in place.



## Results of Project ADAPT Virtual:

*Improved oral health & hygiene ~ Lessened pain & discomfort ~ Improved ability to eat & enjoy food ~ Improved overall health ~ Improved quality of life & wellbeing*

**Describe the types of dental health providers and professionals who provide dental health to older adults.**

- Orthodontist
- Endodontist
- Periodontist
- OMS: oral and maxillofacial surgeon
- Pedodontist
- Dental Hygienist (RDH)
- Dental Assistants



**Additional Material**



4 Sample slides from our Oral Health Care Seminar #1

## Project ADAPT Virtual Webinars Topics.

- Why is good dental health especially important to overall health of older adults?
- Describe the types of dental health professionals who provide care to older adults
- What should older adults do daily to ensure good dental health
- Some clinical health conditions or physiological changes older adults may have that can affect their dental health?
- What types of prescription/OTC medications can impact dental health for older adults?
- Physical impairments that can affect oral health for older adults
- What sensory issues can prevent good oral health care?
- What else should you know about ensuring good dental health?
- Live Q&A session with the dentist