



For Immediate Release

## **April is Oral Health Month**

### **Your Dentist Sees More Than Just Your Teeth Focusing on oral health and diabetes**

(Toronto) --- It is estimated that 2.25 million Canadians have diabetes. Many are unaware they have the condition. By monitoring any oral infections that affect your gums and jaw, your dentist may be able to help detect signs of early onset diabetes.

This is the message that the Ontario Dental Association is helping to publicize during their annual province-wide Oral Health Month in April.

There is growing scientific evidence that suggests a strong relationship between oral health and overall health.

Striving to achieve optimal health is essential for everyone and this becomes even more important when your health has been affected in some way.

Throughout the month, the Ontario Dental Association (ODA) will be helping to raise awareness of the relationship between oral and overall health and focusing its annual public education forum, Oral Health Month, on the subject of oral health and diabetes.

“Good oral health is a vital step in maintaining good overall health,” says Dr. Ian McConnachie, president of the Ontario Dental Association. “We want to draw the public’s attention to the fact that gum disease and diabetes can affect one another. In fact, in some people, significant change in the health of their gums has led to the diagnosis of diabetes.”

Recent studies have revealed that gum disease and diabetes can affect one another. For instance, gum disease can intensify the complications associated with diabetes by increasing blood sugar. Accordingly, studies have also shown that people with diabetes face a greater risk of developing oral infections and gum disease than those who do not have diabetes.

The intention of Oral Health Month 2007 is to allow dentists throughout the province of Ontario to engage their community – wherever they can come together – and share with them important information concerning their oral and overall health.

“Dentists have the medical training, expertise and frequent opportunity through regular dental check-ups, to prevent and diagnose a wide range of potential medical conditions linked to oral health,” explains Dr. McConnachie. “Dentists understand the association between oral and overall health and other medical conditions. As a result, no other individual health care professional is in such a unique position to help educate the public on vital information relevant to diabetes and oral health.”

To find out more about the relationship between oral health and diabetes, or Oral Health Month, you can contact the Ontario Dental Association at (416) 922-3900 or log on to the ODA web site at [www.oda.on.ca](http://www.oda.on.ca)

### **ORAL HEALTH MONTH**

Oral Health Month takes place every April to help build awareness about the importance of Oral Health for all ages. Community events and a province-wide Brush-a-mania program in elementary schools, promote the importance of oral health to overall health. Oral Health Month events also allow members of the public to benefit from dentists’ medical training and expertise by asking any questions they might have about their oral health.

### **THE ONTARIO DENTAL ASSOCIATION**

The Ontario Dental Association (ODA) and its 6,500 members are committed to providing exemplary oral health care. The ODA is a voluntary professional association representing nearly 80 percent of Ontario dentists. As Ontario’s primary source of information on dental health and the profession, the ODA has been enhancing public awareness of the importance of oral health since 1867. The ODA works with health-care professionals, governments and private sector to attain the highest possible quality standards of health care for Ontarians. For more information, please visit the ODA website at [www.oda.on.ca](http://www.oda.on.ca)

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