
Mashkiiziibii Dental Journal

November
2022

Issue #2

Monthly dental newsletter

Editor: Dr. Victoria Gokee, DDS

Are Indigenous communities more prone to oral diseases?

Indigenous communities have some shocking oral health disparities. This is rooted in the many inequalities Indigenous communities face including past and present assimilation and colonization.

According to research, Indigenous peoples have higher rates of cavities and more severe cavities (larger) compared to other populations. Indigenous children have been found to have higher rates of cavities at a younger age.



What is being done on a national level to address these oral health disparities?

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) promotes two key interventions:

1. School sealant program: the Bad River dental clinic participates in this effort through the *Smiles on Wheels School Sealant Program*.

This program started in 2012. We received a grant through IHS for a set of equipment to bring into the schools. In 2013 we received another grant from IHS for a second set of equipment and we were the top-rated grant applicant in the nation! Now our two hygienists are able to see more students with each school visit.

The goal of this project is to increase access to preventative services and improve overall oral health of youth in our community. Our hygienists and assistants visit the schools. Schools serviced include the Bad River Head Start, Ashland Elementary School, Ashland Middle School, Ashland High School, and Our Lady of the Lake. The Bad River Head Start has 2 – 3 visits/year with screenings and fluoride varnishes. Ashland schools have 2 visits/year with screenings, sealants, and fluoride varnishes.



Tooth without sealant

Tooth with sealant

When something suspicious is noted, we encourage youth to have a dental visit to have a dentist evaluate and treat cavities as needed.

Last year 145 youth were evaluated, 302 sealants were placed, 155 sealants repaired, and 261 applications of fluoride! This year we have 157 youth signed up so far!

If you are interested in signing your child up for the school sealant program, please call the clinic. Permission slips are sent home at the beginning of every school year to sign children up for the program.

2. Community water fluoridation: the Bad River tribe currently does not have fluoride in its water. A future issue will examine water fluoridation more in depth.

What is being done on a community level to address these oral health disparities?

The Bad River Health Dental Clinic is striving to provide comprehensive care to the community. Our providers are held to a high standard and actively pursue continuing education to stay knowledgeable about treatment options. As an IHS facility, we offer direct services at no charge to tribal members regardless of insurance status. This makes dental care more accessible without the financial barrier.

Our providers are encouraged to engage with the community and to learn about Ojibwe culture.

With this newsletter we are hoping to help educate the community about oral health and create a platform for transparency and open lines of communication with the clinic and the community.

Normal business hours at 8:00 – 4:30 PM
Closed for tribal holidays

Upcoming closure dates:
12/6/22 afternoon, 12/16/22 afternoon,
12/23/22 afternoon, 12/26/22, 12/27/22

Direct dental phone number:
(715)685-7887

Services we offer:

Call us with any questions or to schedule your appointment today!



- Comprehensive and periodic exams to monitor your oral health with radiographs
- Prophylaxis: regular dental cleanings
- Sealants: protective covering in deep pits/grooves of teeth to help prevent cavities
- SRP: scaling and root planning, aka “deep cleanings” for patients with periodontal disease
- Fillings: removal and replacement of cavities, replacement of missing tooth structure
- Root canals: removal of nerve within the tooth with a filling put inside tooth
- Extractions: pulling teeth
- Biopsies: testing of suspicious tissue
- Invisalign: removable trays to align teeth
- Other miscellaneous surgeries
- Crowns: full coverage restoration of teeth, aka “caps”
- Brides/fixed partial dentures: full coverage restorations that stay in your mouth with pontics or “hanging teeth” to fill in a space or two
- Removable partial dentures: prosthesis that is removed nightly to replace teeth
- Complete dentures: full set of fake teeth that you remove nightly

As an IHS clinic we offer our direct services at no charge to tribal members from any reservation regardless of insurance status.

Direct services include things that we do directly at our clinic: exams, cleanings, fillings, root canals, and pulling teeth.

Services that have a fee include things we need to send off to a lab such as: crowns, bridges, partials, dentures, Invisalign



Crown



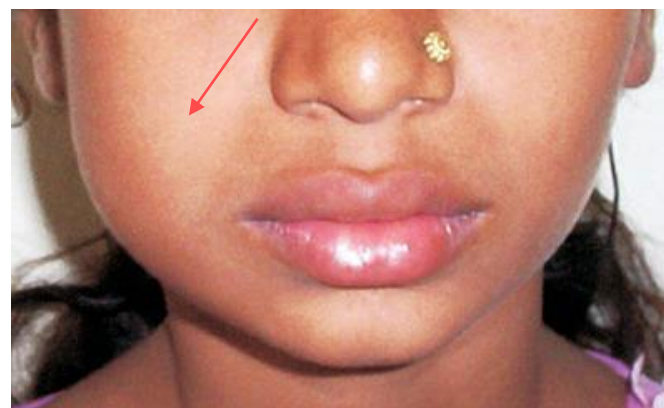
Bridge/fixed partial denture



Removable partial denture



Complete dentures



Example of dental emergency with lower right side of the face swelling from infected tooth.

On Friday December 16th and Friday December 23rd our emergency walk-in clinic will be from 8:30 – 11:00 due to afternoon closure.

Effective October 24th, 2022 Bad River Dental will be implementing an emergency walk in clinic. If you have emergency needs such as facial swelling or uncontrollable pain, we encourage you to come in from 12:30 – 3:00 Monday – Friday on days the tribe is open. Once here, you will be evaluated and seen based on severity.

If you have an urgent need such as a broken tooth without pain, please call us at (715)685-7887. If no answer, feel free to leave a voicemail.

Dental fun fact: on rare occasions babies can be born with a tooth. This is called a “natal tooth”.

Ojibwe dental word of the month:
Toothbrush: giziigaabide'on

Please email v.gokee@badriverhwc.com with any questions or topics you would like addressed in next month's issue! All submissions will remain anonymous.

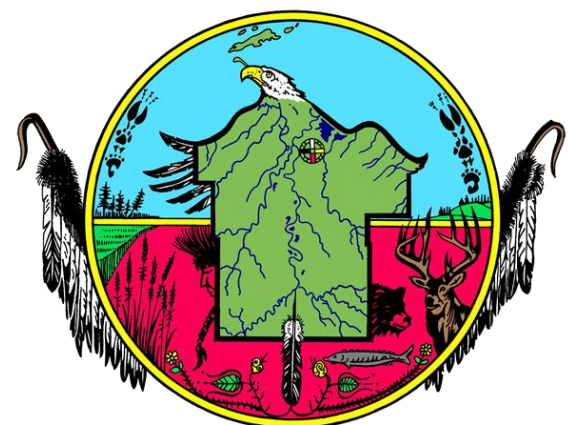
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What is a dental emergency vs a dental urgency?

Emergency patient: someone in need of immediate care and attention. Emergent needs include: significant pain, noticeable swelling on the face, difficulty opening their mouth and/or someone who has sustained trauma to the face within the past 24 hours.

If you have trouble breathing, swallowing your own spit, or swelling below the jawbone please go to the ER.

Urgency patient: someone in need of swift dental intervention. Urgent needs include: front tooth chip, broken dentures, lost crown/temporary on teeth without root canals, or need for medical clearance for surgery.



Works Cited:

- Nath, Sonia, et al. “Dental Health Inequalities among Indigenous Populations: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.” *Caries Research*, S. Karger AG, 2021,
[https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8491513/#:~:text=Indigenous%20populations%20experienced%20more%20decayed,0.13\)%20than%20their%20nonindigenous%20counterparts.](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8491513/#:~:text=Indigenous%20populations%20experienced%20more%20decayed,0.13)%20than%20their%20nonindigenous%20counterparts.)
- Holve, Steve, et al. “Early Childhood Caries in Indigenous Communities.” *American Academy of Pediatrics*, American Academy of Pediatrics, 1 June 2021,
https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/147/6/e2021051481/180261/Early-Childhood-Caries-in-Indigenous-Communities?autologincheck=redirected&_ga=2.103348231.609036818.1668016829-1899850851.1668016829.