



Overview

Special Olympics Special Smiles® (dentistry) provides **comprehensive oral health care information, free dental screenings, instructions on correct brushing and flossing techniques, and preventative supplies like toothpaste, toothbrushes, and floss** to athletes and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Through Special Smiles, volunteer dental health professionals and students perform oral health screenings, oral hygiene instruction, mouthguard adaptation, and fluoride application to athletes participating in the screening.

Facts and Impact:

Special Smiles screenings have found that a large percentage of Special Olympics athletes in the U.S. are unaware of the condition of their oral health, and experience the following conditions:

13% have mouth pain.

46% have gingival signs.

44% have untreated tooth decay.

Purpose and Goals:

The goal of Special Smiles is to **create awareness and improves access to dental care** for Special Olympics athletes and people with IDD. This is achieved by:

- Developing a body of knowledge about the oral health care needs of children and adults with disabilities.
- Providing a list of regional dental professionals who care for people with IDD to all athletes who participate in Special Smiles.
- Raising dental professionals' awareness of the oral health concerns of people with IDD, including difficulties involved in accessing care.
- Administering routine dental care to promote the maintenance of clean teeth.

Contact:

specialsmiles@specialolympics.org