



Meth and Oral Health

A collaboration between Delta Dental of Nebraska and Hazelden Foundation

Today, your agency may face a public health challenge that no one could have predicted a decade ago—the devastating impact of methamphetamine (meth) use on a patient's health and oral health. According to the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use, nearly 12 million Americans have tried a methamphetamine. Worst of all, these meth users are often young people between 18 and 25 years old, who are not familiar with (or are in denial about) the devastating effects of the drug.

In particular, public health providers and professionals who work with clients who use meth, may notice the client's mouth contains many teeth that are sharply fractured or resemble black stubs. Typically these teeth require extensive dental restoration or must be extracted.

To address this issue, Hazelden Foundation, one of the nation's most highly respected drug rehabilitation centers, collaborated with Delta Dental of Nebraska to create the informational booklet, *Meth and Oral Health: A Guide for Dental Professionals*.

This booklet was authored by three dental health professionals who are also national experts on the impacts of meth on oral health. The booklet offers information about methamphetamine, user profiles, and can assist public and dental health care professionals to deal with the following questions:

- How can you talk to a patient who shows signs of meth use?
- What ethical obligations do you have to report a suspected meth user?
- What causes decay from meth use?
- How can you motivate patients who have decay due to meth or other drug use?
- How can you help an addicted patient find an appropriate drug and alcohol treatment facility?

The authors are also developing two free PowerPoint presentations on meth mouth that can be used for community, public health and professional audiences. A script to frequently asked questions will accompany each presentation. These presentations will be available summer of 2008 on this Web site.