Lower income ninth-graders are more than twice as likely to have untreated tooth decay.

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood.

Dental sealants prevent tooth decay.

Dental sealants are about one-third the cost of a filling.

Tooth decay falls short by 7% of the Healthy People 2020 target (48%).

More than 18,000 ninth-graders have had tooth decay in their adult teeth.

1 in 6 ninth-graders need dental treatment for tooth decay.

Tooth decay can impact a child’s life in the following ways:

- learning
- self-esteem
- speaking
- sleeping
- eating

During the 2014-15 school year, baseline data were collected on the oral health of Wisconsin’s ninth grade students. Overall, the data showed that tooth decay, which is common among younger children, is also prevalent among adolescents. The amount of tooth decay and access to protective dental sealants varied significantly by race, ethnicity, and income. These disparities require action among state, local, and private partners to ensure equitable access to dental care. Reducing caries experiences—while continuing to meet or exceed statewide goals for dental sealants and untreated decay—also means helping teens access school-based sealant programs and other prevention initiatives.
More than 6 in 10 ninth-graders have at least one dental sealant while about 3 in 10 have five or more.

**RACE AND ETHNICITY DISPARITIES**

Non-Hispanic White ninth-graders are twice as likely to have five or more dental sealants compared to Non-Hispanic Black ninth-graders.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Among young people, poor oral health may have consequences for general health and psychosocial well-being.

**TOOTH BRUSHING**

Nearly 50% of ninth-grade students reported brushing their teeth less than twice per day.

For more information about the Wisconsin Healthy Smiles Survey visit: