

Oral health

Oral health refers to the health of our teeth and mouth. It is critical to the good health and wellbeing of children and adults. **Oral diseases** are among the **most prevalent chronic diseases** in New Zealand and represent a considerable burden on the health of the public.

On the right are some findings from the **Community Oral Health Services programme** from **2002 to 2016**. It covers children at 5 years of age or in Year 8 at school on the mean number of decayed, missing and filled teeth, and the percentage of children that are caries free.

We also present information on **visiting a dental health care worker** and **teeth extraction** due to poor oral health, sourced from the **New Zealand Health Survey** (NZHS), Ministry of Health, from 2006/07 to 2016/17.



Māori children

Māori children aged 1–14 years:

had a **higher** number of **decayed, missing** and **filled teeth** than non-Māori children at either **5 years of age** or at **school year 8**

were **less likely** to be **caries free** than non-Māori children at either **5 years of age** or at **school year 8**

were **equally as likely** as non-Māori children to have **visited a dental health care worker** in the past 12 months

were **more likely** to have **had teeth extracted** due to **decay, abscess or infection** than non-Māori children in the past 12 months.

These **patterns** have **not changed much** over time.



Māori adults

Māori adults aged 15 years and over:

were **less likely** than non-Māori adults with natural teeth to have **visited a dental health care worker** in the past 12 months

were **more likely** than non-Māori adults with natural teeth to report that they had **never visited a dental health care worker at all**, or usually **only visited a dental health care worker for dental problems**

were **more likely** to have **had teeth extracted** due to **decay, abscess, infection or gum disease** than non-Māori adults in the past 12 months.

These **patterns** have **not changed much** over time.