

**20 March 2026**

**Media release**

**The Dental Association helps launch new rheumatic fever learning module for health professionals**

The New Zealand Dental Association (NZDA) has partnered with Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora to support the development of a new online learning module focused on the link between oral health and rheumatic fever.

Launched during Heart Health Awareness Month in February, the module aims to strengthen understanding about rheumatic heart disease and oral health across the health workforce.

It brings together key information on the relationship between oral health, acute rheumatic fever, rheumatic heart disease, and infective endocarditis.

Funded by Health New Zealand, the resource features a series of four short videos.

Each combines clinical insights with interactive learning elements and cultural and whānau perspectives. Together, they are designed to support more consistent prevention, earlier detection, and better coordinated care.

NZDA-Colgate Oral Health Promotion Manager Anishma Ram says the resource highlights the role oral health plays within the wider health system.

“Good oral health cannot be separated from overall health.

“This resource highlights how health professionals can support earlier recognition of oral health issues and timely referral to dental and oral health teams, particularly for patients at risk of acute rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease.

“It supports better coordination of care, without changing scope or adding new requirements for clinicians.”

The module has been developed as a practical educational tool to support shared understanding across the workforce.

It sits alongside existing standards of care and is intended to help clinicians make informed decisions, recognise when dental input may be needed, and support more connected care for patients.

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