# Nanorobotics in Dentistry: A New Horizon for Oral Healthcare

Dr. Purushottam S Rakhewar<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Mahika S Borgave<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Pooja V Singh<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Aaishwarya S Tikhile<sup>4</sup>, Dr. Dhanshri P Bawa<sup>5</sup>

1, 2, 3, 4, 5SMBT Dental College and Hospital, Sangamner 422608, Ahilyanagar, Maharashtra, India

Abstract: Nanorobotics in dentistry represents a revolutionary advancement, offering precision at the molecular and cellular levels for diagnostic, preventive, and therapeutic purposes. The integration of nanotechnology, nanorobots, and nanorobotics into dental care enables early disease detection, targeted drug delivery, enhanced orthodontic treatments, and improved dental implant success. Key applications include non-invasive caries management, hypersensitivity treatment, periodontal therapy, and continuous oral hygiene maintenance through autonomous dentifrobots. The potential of mobile and light-propelled nanorobots, along with the integration of artificial intelligence, points to a future where dentistry becomes more personalized, efficient, and minimally invasive. Despite these benefits, challenges such as biocompatibility, ethical concerns, regulatory frameworks, and cost-effectiveness must be addressed before nanorobotics can achieve widespread clinical adoption. With ongoing interdisciplinary research, nanodentistry is poised to become a cornerstone of next-generation oral healthcare.

Keywords: Nanotechnology, Nanorobots, Nanorobotics, Dentifrobots, Artificial Intelligence, Nanodentistry

#### 1. Introduction

When you think about the future of medicine, you usually imagine tiny robots traveling through your body, fixing problems before they even begin. Now imagine that happening in your mouth. Strange, right? But not so much anymore. That's the idea behind nanorobotics in dentistry. It's a futuristic vision that's slowly becoming reality.

Nanotechnology, at its core, is the manipulation of matter at an incredibly small scale—about one billionth of a meter (Viswa Chandra, 2023). That's smaller than anything you can see under a normal microscope. It sounds like something out of science fiction. But it's real. Nanotechnology isn't just about making things smaller; it's about changing how we interact with the physical world, especially inside our own bodies.

Now, nanorobotics takes this a step further. Instead of just creating tiny particles, scientists design and build tiny *machines*. These machines, called nanorobots, can move, sense their environment, and perform specific tasks (Sachdeva et al., 2021). Imagine microscopic soldiers, engineers, and doctors, all working in the small environment of your teeth and gums. It's thrilling—and a little intimidating, too.

In dentistry, nanorobotics isn't just a new toy for scientists. It's a response to real-world needs. Traditional dentistry has always been reactive: we fill cavities after decay sets in, we pull teeth after infection. But what if we could prevent those things from happening altogether? What if treatment could be so precise that no healthy tissue is ever touched? This is the promise of nanodentistry (Rajendran et al., 2023).

The relevance today can't be overstated. Dental diseases like cavities and periodontitis remain some of the most common health problems worldwide. Despite advances in hygiene and treatment, millions suffer tooth loss and pain every year. Nanorobotics offers a way to change that story. By targeting

disease at the molecular level, treatments can become faster, less painful, and way more effective (Soni, 2024).

And it's not just about treatments. It's about diagnostics too. Think about how amazing it would be if nanorobots swimming in your saliva could detect early signs of oral cancer before even a single visible symptom appears (Ghods et al., 2022). That could save lives, not just teeth.

But it's not all smooth sailing. Developing nanorobots that are safe, effective, and affordable is a huge challenge. And there are real ethical concerns too. People naturally worry about having machines inside their bodies, even tiny ones (Cheraghiyan, 2025). How do we ensure safety? Who regulates this? These questions are still very much open.

The purpose of this paper is simple but ambitious. It aims to explore the emerging field of nanorobotics in dentistry in a detailed and critical manner. We will discuss what nanorobots are, how they work, and what they can do for oral health. We'll explore both the glittering promises and the serious hurdles. The paper also dives deep into potential applications, ethical considerations, future prospects, and the many unanswered questions that still surround this fascinating topic.

Importantly, the scope is limited to clinical and near-clinical uses of nanorobots. We're not going to talk about basic nanomaterials or futuristic concepts that are still a hundred years away. Instead, this paper focuses on what could soon be a part of every dentist's toolkit — maybe within your own lifetime (Baksi and Roy, 2021).

Dentistry, traditionally rooted in mechanical repairs, is now standing at the doorway of biological precision. With nanorobotics, the approach changes from fixing damage to actively managing and preventing it on a molecular scale. It's a completely new mindset. A disruptive shift, not just an evolution.

As we journey through this paper, one thing becomes very

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clear. Nanorobotics is not just another new technique or trend. It's a gateway to fundamentally changing how we think about oral health, how we treat diseases, and maybe, just maybe, how we live longer and healthier lives with our own teeth intact.

### 2. Concept of Nanorobotics

Trying to imagine a robot so small that it's invisible to the human eye is. . . honestly, a little bit mind-blowing. But that's exactly what nanorobotics is all about. In dentistry, these nanorobots aren't just tiny machines for the sake of being tiny. They have a job to do. A big one. Fix teeth, kill bacteria, deliver drugs right where they're needed. And they do it by being smart, agile, and insanely precise (Sachdeva et al., 2021).

First, let's talk about structure and functionality. Dental nanorobots are not random floating particles. They are meticulously engineered devices. Think of them as microscopic submarines or drones. Tiny shells, maybe a few hundred nanometers wide, made from biocompatible materials like carbon nanotubes or specialized polymers (Rajendran et al., 2023). Inside that shell? Sensors, motors, even storage compartments. Some models are designed like capsules, others like little spirals or rods that can twist and turn through fluids. And the best part—they're smart. They can recognize specific tissues, detect infection markers, and react accordingly.

But movement in the human body isn't like driving on a highway. It's chaos. So these nanobots need navigation systems. And honestly? It's genius how they do it. Some designs rely on chemical gradients—literally "smelling" their way toward infection (Soni, 2024). Others use electromagnetic fields or respond to temperature changes. And still others are built to swim using tiny flagella-like appendages, copying how bacteria move naturally (Ghods et al., 2022). It's nature teaching machines.

Sensing the environment is crucial too. These nanorobots aren't blind. They come packed with molecular sensors—tiny devices that can detect changes in pH, temperature, chemical concentrations, or even electric fields (Cheraghiyan, 2025). This sensory input lets them find cavities before your dentist could ever spot them, or identify cancer cells while they're still forming clusters too small to see on a scan.

Of course, a machine needs power. This is where energy acquisition gets really creative. Instead of carrying big batteries (which obviously wouldn't fit), nanorobots often draw energy from their surroundings. Some absorb chemical energy from body fluids. Some proposed designs convert heat differences in the mouth into electrical energy (Baksi and Roy, 2021). Others may be wirelessly powered using external magnetic fields. It's not perfect yet—keeping these tiny things running for long periods is one of the big technical hurdles researchers face today.

And then there's the brains—the operational programming. A nanorobot isn't useful unless it knows what to do. Some are pre-programmed before being released into the mouth.

They carry a set of instructions like "find bacteria, release drug, deactivate." Simple but effective (Dakhale et al., 2023). Others are more sophisticated, equipped with microprocessors that can make basic decisions based on real-time data. Imagine a tiny onboard computer comparing chemical signatures and deciding whether to act or to move on.

Communication matters too. Dentists need a way to control or monitor the bots. Future designs may allow dentists to "talk" to nanorobots via acoustic signals, infrared beams, or magnetic pulses. Like remote-controlling a tiny fleet, but inside a human mouth (Hussain et al., 2023). Scary? Maybe a little. Exciting? Absolutely.

But here's the thing. Even with all this amazing tech, we're still at the early stages. Most working prototypes today are in labs, not clinics. Designing nanorobots that are small, powerful, smart, AND safe is an insane engineering challenge (Ussia et al., 2022). Every step forward feels like a tiny miracle. And yet, the progress is undeniable.

Nanorobots offer something dentistry has never really had before: a way to interact with oral health problems at the earliest molecular stages, long before visible damage happens. They're not just tools. They're potential partners in maintaining lifelong oral health (Bijli et al., 2024).

In the end, the concept of nanorobotics isn't just about shrinking machines. It's about rethinking what machines can do, how they can behave, and how they can blend seamlessly into biology. It's the dream of medicine that acts before disease even becomes a threat—and it all starts with a robot you'll never see.

#### 3. Applications of Nanorobotics in Dentistry

Nanorobotics isn't just a fancy idea anymore. It's slowly creeping into real-world dentistry, changing how problems are diagnosed, treated, and even prevented. Although the technology isn't fully mainstream yet, the applications that researchers and clinicians are dreaming up are nothing short of amazing. And a little scary too, if you think too much about machines swimming around in your mouth. But that's the price of progress, right?

#### 3.1 Diagnostic Applications

Imagine a world where you don't wait for a toothache to find out you have a cavity. Nanorobots could make that possible. Early disease detection is one of the most talked-about uses of dental nanorobots. These tiny machines could roam the mouth, searching for molecular signals of decay, infection, or even cancer long before physical symptoms appear (Soni, 2024). No drilling. No pain. Just prevention.

Then there's the magic of salivary diagnostics. Saliva, believe it or not, carries a ton of information about what's going on inside your body. Molecular markers for diseases like oral cancer, diabetes, and even heart disease can be detected with the right technology. Nanorobots designed to analyze saliva could revolutionize diagnostics by offering real-time, chairside analysis that requires no needles and no

long lab waits (Ghods et al., 2022). It's faster, easier, and way less scary for patients who hate traditional medical tests.

#### 3.2 Therapeutic Applications

Dentists have been fighting cavities forever. But caries prevention with nanorobots could finally turn the tables. These tiny bots can detect bacterial colonies, destroy the bad bacteria without touching healthy cells, and maybe even repair early enamel damage (Cheraghiyan, 2025). No more fillings. No more drills. Just tiny robots doing their job while you smile blissfully unaware.

Hypersensitivity is another beast altogether. Anyone who's ever cringed from ice cream knows the pain. Management of dentinal hypersensitivity using nanorobots offers a faster, more permanent fix. By physically blocking the exposed dentinal tubules at a microscopic level, patients could get instant relief without expensive or temporary solutions (Baksi and Roy, 2021).

And if you think that's impressive, wait till you hear about site-specific drug delivery. Forget systemic antibiotics that wreck your gut flora. Nanocapsules carrying targeted drugs could be delivered exactly where they're needed in the mouth, like pinpoint missiles striking only the enemy (Dakhale et al., 2023). Minimal side effects. Maximum impact.

#### 3.3 Surgical and Orthodontic Applications

Orthodontics isn't just about braces anymore. Nanorobotic interventions in orthodontics promise faster, less painful, and more precise tooth movements. Nanorobots could assist in repositioning teeth at the cellular level by manipulating bone remodeling processes without metal brackets or wires (Hussain et al., 2023). It almost sounds too good to be true.

One of the worst problems with dental implants is biofilm buildup—basically bacterial slime that leads to failure. Biofilm removal from implants using nanorobots could solve this nightmare. Specialized nanobots can detect and eradicate biofilms without harming surrounding tissues (Ussia et al., 2022). That's not just cool; it's life-changing for thousands of patients struggling with implant complications.

And speaking of infections, nanorobotic assistance in root canal therapy could be a game- changer too. Root canals right now are messy and sometimes incomplete. But nanobots could navigate microscopic tubules inside teeth, seek out infected pulp, and sterilize the area completely, reducing the chance of treatment failure (Bijli et al., 2024). If this becomes common, root canal horror stories might finally become a thing of the past.

#### 3.4 Preventive Dentistry

Most dental problems happen because people don't brush or floss properly. It's human nature. But what if you didn't have to rely on your morning and night routines? Nanorobotic dentifrices are being developed to handle oral hygiene automatically. Tiny cleaning bots delivered through mouthwashes or toothpaste could keep teeth clean 24/7 by removing plaque, metabolizing food debris, and neutralizing harmful bacteria (Muhumed et al., 2023). It sounds like science fiction, but researchers are working hard to make it real

And it's not just adults who will benefit. Pediatric dentistry could be totally transformed. Kids often fear the dentist and struggle with dental care routines. Nanorobots could prevent caries formation before it even starts, eliminating the need for scary drills and injections in the first place (Kelotte et al., 2023). Less fear, fewer tears, better smiles.

#### 3.5 Implantology and Regenerative Dentistry

Implant failures are a heartbreaking (and expensive) problem. Nanorobots could enhance implant osseointegration by modifying implant surfaces at the nanoscale. This promotes faster and stronger bonding between bone and implant, leading to more stable and longer-lasting restorations (Dasgupta et al., 2022).

Finally, there's nanotechnology in tissue engineering and full tooth regeneration. Scientists are working on creating whole teeth—not dentures, not implants, but fully functional biological teeth using a mix of stem cells, nanoscaffolds, and robotic assistance (Viswa Chandra, 2023). It's early days, sure. But imagine losing a tooth and growing a new one naturally, assisted by tiny machines orchestrating the growth process like a microscopic construction crew. Incredible, right?

#### 4. Future Innovations

If we're honest, most of the current nanorobotic applications still live in labs or journals. Not in clinics. Not yet. But the future? That's where the real excitement brews. The future of nanorobotics in dentistry isn't just about making things smaller or smarter—it's about giving them legs. Giving them brains. And, strangely enough, giving them light.

#### 4.1 Mobile and Light-Propelled Nanorobots

The dream is movement. Controlled, targeted movement. Right now, many prototype nanobots float passively or rely on chemical trails for direction. That works. . . kind of. But what researchers want—and what patients will one day need—are bots that move intentionally. That's where mobile nanobot systems come in. These are tiny machines that can crawl or swim inside the oral cavity with precision, guided by external fields or internal sensors. Some might be magnetically navigated, others controlled through microfluidic designs or heat gradients (Dasgupta et al., 2022). The tech's messy. It's experimental. But every year, it gets a bit more stable.

One of the coolest things being explored is light propulsion. Yep—light-propelled nanorobots. Doesn't sound dental, does it? But it's real. These bots are designed to respond to specific wavelengths of light, converting that energy into mechanical motion (Ussia et al., 2022). Some of them are already showing promise in breaking down biofilms—those nasty, sticky bacterial layers that form on implants and can

lead to infection or failure. These light-driven bots can zoom in, break down that muck, and then float off, causing minimal harm to surrounding healthy tissues. It's clean, it's elegant, and it avoids the need for toxic disinfectants.

Now imagine that being done in real-time, inside someone's mouth, without surgery. No drills, no pulling, no cutting. Just light. And motion. And healing.

Of course, we're still far off from seeing these in every clinic. But that doesn't stop the labs from pushing forward. The momentum is there.

#### 4.2 Integration with Artificial Intelligence

Alright, so movement is great. But movement without intelligence? That's chaos. The next leap isn't just in how nanorobots travel—but in how they *think*. And for that, we turn to artificial intelligence.

Now AI in dentistry isn't new. We already use it to analyze X-rays, predict treatment outcomes, even book your appointments. But combining AI with nanorobotics? That's next level. Think of it like this: nanorobots would be the body, but AI is the brain. Together, they can do things that neither could manage alone (Jain and Singla, 2023).

Take diagnostics, for example. With smart sensors and onboard microchips, nanorobots could scan tissue in real time and send data to an AI system that's trained on thousands—maybe millions—of patient records. That AI could instantly determine if a lesion is precancerous, or if a gum pocket is deepening too fast, or if inflammation suggests early-stage disease (Londhey et al., 2021). Then, the nanobot could be programmed to act—or not—based on that conclusion. That's AI-driven smart diagnostics and treatment planning.

It doesn't end there. Personalized dentistry is where it really shines. Each person's mouth is a unique environment. Bacteria levels, pH balance, genetics—it's all different. But with enough real-time feedback from nanobots, an AI system could tailor treatment for each individual in ways no human dentist could. Imagine getting a customized toothpaste formulation every week based on your mouth's exact bacterial profile. Or having nanobots deliver a microdose of anti- inflammatory medication to one gum pocket and nowhere else. That's personalized oral healthcare through nanotechnological interfaces, and it's not just science fiction anymore (Nila et al., 2023).

Still, there's hesitation. People worry about giving machines too much control. What if the AI makes the wrong call? What if the system gets hacked? These are valid concerns—and honestly, the tech world hasn't answered them well yet. Ethics, data privacy, system security— those are the elephants in the room. But despite the fear, the potential is too great to ignore.

With AI guiding their behavior and light or fields guiding their movement, nanorobots of the future won't just be machines. They'll be autonomous partners in oral health, adjusting treatments as they go, communicating back to your care team, and adapting to your biology minute-by-minute. That's not just futuristic dentistry. That's revolutionary healthcare.

### 5. Challenges and Ethical Considerations

Nanorobotics in dentistry sounds like a dream. You know—no pain, no drills, instant diagnosis, real-time healing. But like most good things in medicine, there's a catch. Actually, a few. The path from concept to clinic is filled with hurdles—some technical, others ethical, and honestly, a few are just about plain old money.

Let's start with the technical barriers. Making a robot that's smaller than a single blood cell is already hard. But now make it safe, smart, and biocompatible. That's a whole new level of engineering madness. One of the biggest issues researchers still face is how the human body responds to these tiny foreign objects. Will the immune system attack them? Will they trigger inflammation or allergic reactions? Some materials work well in theory but break down or clump inside tissue in practice (Girigosavi and Oak, 2021). And then there's control. Once nanobots are in the body, how do you direct them? How do you retrieve them if something goes wrong? We still don't have a fail-safe shutdown protocol for internal nanomachines. That's a problem.

Then there's the question nobody likes to ask out loud: What happens if they malfunction? Do they stop working quietly? Or do they move somewhere they shouldn't and start damaging healthy tissue? There's no dentist's drill that can chase them in and fix the mess. This is new territory, and that's part of what makes people nervous.

Now to the ethical issues. Consent is huge. Traditional dental procedures are straightforward— you ask, the patient agrees. But with nanorobotics, it's a different ballgame. Patients need to understand that autonomous machines will be operating inside their body. That's hard to explain. Even harder to understand. And some folks just aren't comfortable with it, no matter how many benefits you promise (Nila et al., 2023). Informed consent has to evolve—become more transparent, more educational, and way more thorough than it is now.

And then there's privacy. Think about it. These nanorobots collect data from inside your mouth. Maybe even from your bloodstream. That's biological surveillance. What happens to that data? Where is it stored? Who can access it? If companies start selling dental nanobots connected to apps or cloud systems, that opens up a whole new set of risks. Imagine your oral health data being hacked or sold to third-party marketers. Sounds like sci-fi, but we've already seen similar breaches in wearable tech and medical apps (Londhey et al., 2021). The tech might be tiny, but may impact huge.

We also need to talk about the economic side of this. Because right now, let's be honest—this stuff is expensive. Research, development, manufacturing, clinical testing—it all adds up. And when nanorobotic systems do hit the market, they won't be cheap. That raises some tough

questions about accessibility. Will only rich patients in private clinics be able to afford them? What about public healthcare systems that already struggle to cover basic dental care? It could widen the gap between those who can afford high-tech care and those who can't (Jain and Singla, 2023).

Plus, training is another hurdle. Dentists today aren't trained to operate fleets of microscopic robots. That's going to take a complete overhaul of dental education. New courses. New certifications. New standards. Until then, implementation will be limited to specialist centers or research hospitals.

So yeah—nanorobotics is incredible. It could change everything. But if we're not careful, it could also create a healthcare system where only a few benefit while the rest are left behind. That's not innovation. That's inequality.

The future of dental nanotechnology depends not just on what we can invent, but on how wisely—and fairly—we choose to use it.

#### 6. Conclusion

It's strange how something so small can hold such massive potential. Nanorobotics in dentistry isn't just about replacing tools with tinier ones. It's about completely reimagining how we think about oral care. Not just responding to damage—but predicting it, preventing it, even reversing it at the cellular level. The impact, even now in its early stages, is undeniable. From diagnostics to drug delivery, from biofilm disruption to bone regeneration, nanorobots promise to touch almost every corner of dentistry in the years ahead (Adil et al., 2025).

And it's not a solo effort. It never was. What makes this field so powerful—and so complicated—is how many worlds need to come together for it to work. Engineers building the bots. Dentists identifying clinical problems. Biologists ensuring compatibility with living tissue. Ethicists drawing the boundaries. And AI experts writing the code that helps nanobots think and act. Without interdisciplinary collaboration, this whole thing falls apart (Elmarsafy, 2025). You can't just throw a robot into someone's gumline and hope for the best. Every line of code, every microscopic part, every drop of material—it all needs to speak the language of medicine, of biology, of real patient care.

But let's be honest here. We're not there yet. We're still in the chapter where ideas are being tested, and fears are being weighed. It's hard. The gap between lab theory and chairside reality is wide. There are still too many unknowns, too many risks. But at the same time? There's momentum. Real one. Companies are investing. Researchers are publishing. And patients, surprisingly, are becoming curious instead of scared.

If we look forward—10, maybe 15 years—what could that future look like? Maybe your dentist won't wear gloves and use mirrors anymore. Maybe instead, they'll release a swarm of programmed nanobots into your mouth. They'll diagnose, treat, and report back—all before your appointment is even over. Treatments could be tailored to your genetics, your saliva, your bacteria levels. No two mouths would be treated the same. Because no two mouths are the same. That's the

kind of personalized dental future nanorobotics opens up (Kelotte et al., 2023).

But to reach that future, the focus has to shift from "can we build it?" to "should we?" and "how do we do it responsibly?" The science is catching up fast. Now, it's time for the systems— ethical, educational, legal, and social—to keep pace.

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