

Examining Oral Health and Wellness in Arizona

2023 Report

Commissioned by Delta Dental of Arizona

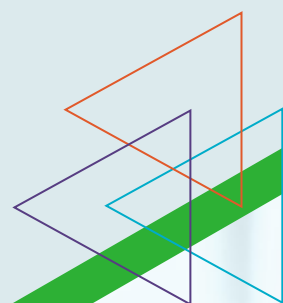


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Foreword from Michael Jones

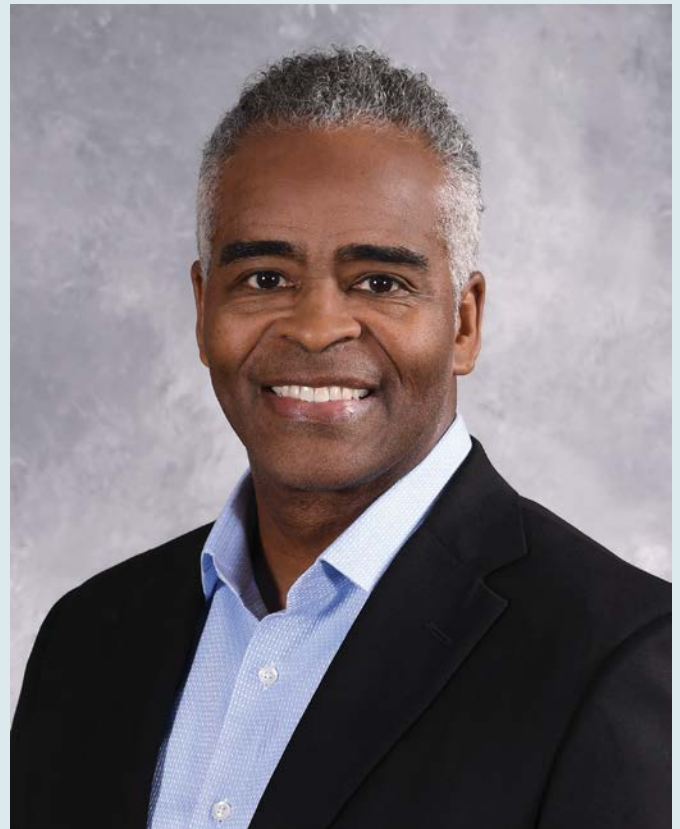
President & CEO, Delta Dental of Arizona

Arizonans are becoming more aware of the vital link between oral health and overall well-being. This understanding about holistic wellness is influencing at-home oral health care and increasing routine, preventive visits to the dentists.

To advance our mission to create a better path to health and wellness, Delta Dental of Arizona is focused on engaging the community around whole person health, supporting innovative programs and providing equitable access to care. A core element of this work is in the continued measurement and analysis of behaviors and trends. We are proud to present the “Examining Oral Health and Wellness in Arizona” 2023 report, which provides unique insight into oral and overall health behaviors in our state.

Most Arizonans (96%) believe that their oral health is very, if not extremely, important to their overall health. The report demonstrates a strong knowledge among the various generations of the impact of preventive oral health care and identifies the significance of dental insurance in obtaining care. Additionally, 96% of parents in Arizona think their child’s oral health is important to their overall health and are actively making sure their children adhere to recommended oral care guidelines.

The work here is just beginning. Delta Dental of Arizona will continue driving and leading partnerships, collaborations and engagements focused on creating a path to better health and wellness.



Michael Jones
President & CEO,
Delta Dental of Arizona

A message from Heather Schneider, DMD

Dental Director, Delta Dental of Arizona

Good oral health is vitally important to the overall health and well-being of the body. As an advocate for the health and wellness of our community, I'm encouraged to see that most Arizonans (96%) continue to understand the connection and its significance.

I'm also excited about Arizonans staying consistent with their oral health routines. In fact, more than three-quarters of adults are keeping up with recommended brushing, mouthwash and flossing usage standards. They are also focusing on prevention – approximately 6 in 10 adults maintain regular dental checkups to reduce their chances of unexpected care in the future. This is so encouraging given what we know about the mouth body connection and the ways in which oral health directly impacts various body systems and health conditions!

The research also shows increased participation in oral health trends. Gen Z is driving the use of eco-friendly and non-traditional oral health products like bamboo or plant-based toothbrushes. Meanwhile, Arizonans seeking cosmetic care increased by 11% over last year.

The important role dental insurance plays in supporting optimal oral and overall health cannot be overstated. An overwhelming majority of Arizonans with dental insurance say it gives peace of mind, helps save money in the long run and allows for a healthy life. Dental coverage is critical to reducing barriers to care so everyone can enjoy a better quality of life.

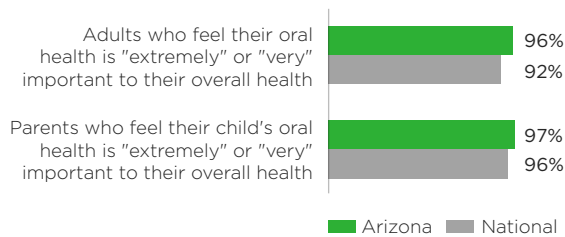


Heather Schneider, DMD
Dental Director,
Delta Dental of Arizona

Oral health remains a critical component of holistic health and wellness across generations in Arizona

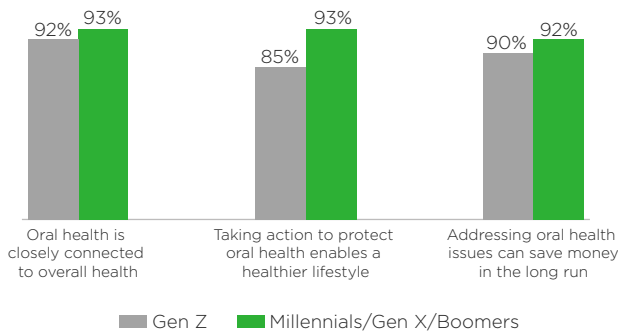
Adults' understanding of the critical connection between oral health and overall health is positive.

Most Arizonans believe their oral health is very, if not extremely, important to their overall health. This understanding is slightly above national results.



However, there is a common level of understanding between generations in Arizona. Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X and Boomers have a high-level of connection to oral health, which could be a result of an increased emphasis on healthier lifestyles.

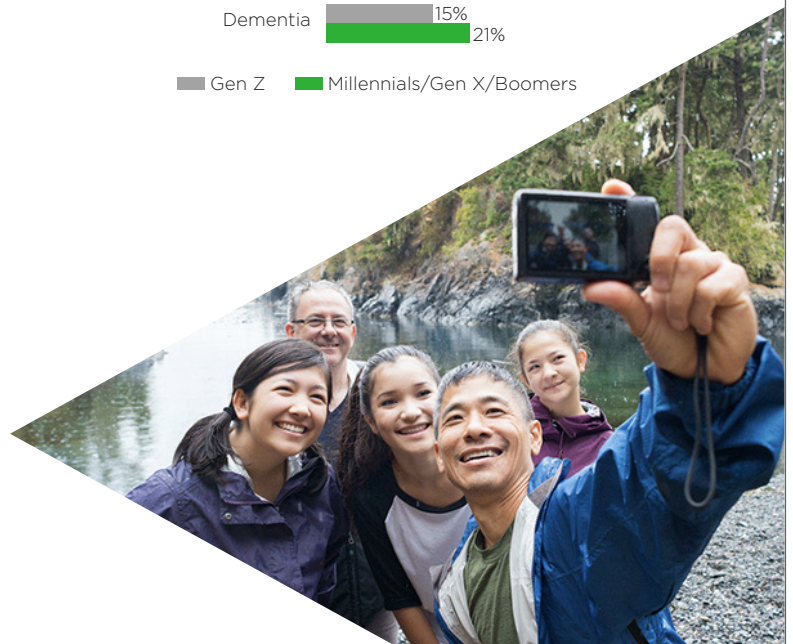
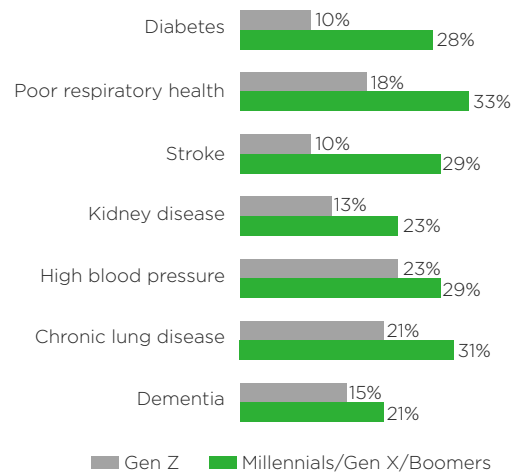
The percentage of adults who agreed with each statement:



While Gen Z understand there is a strong overall connection between their oral health and overall health, they are less knowledgeable than other generations (Millennials, Gen X, Boomers) on the link between poor oral health and specific chronic conditions and diseases.

It is also notable that Gen Z in Arizona regularly falls below the national average in their knowledge of oral health's impact on chronic conditions. Increasing education among all adults, but especially among Gen Z, may result in better health outcomes.

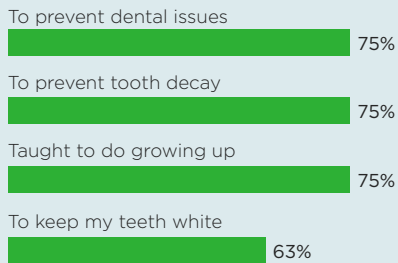
The percentage of adults who understand the connection between oral health and specific health conditions:



Arizonans brush their teeth for a wide variety of reasons.

Prevention and routine are the prominent motivators for brushing teeth, though cosmetic reasons aren't far behind.

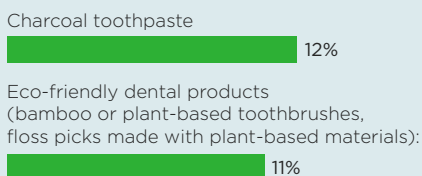
Reasons for brushing



Women are **10%** more likely than men to brush to prevent dental issues overall and **18%** more likely than men to brush to maintain an attractive smile.

Boomers+ are **6%** more likely than younger generations to brush their teeth to maintain or improve their overall health.

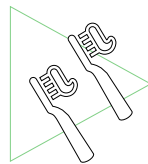
Traditional oral care products are most common, but Arizonans are turning to a more eco-friendly and non-traditional oral care product choices.



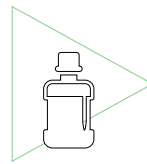
Arizonans practice proper oral health care habits to avoid serious dental issues and major expenses

During the last year, Arizonans practiced good oral health habits at home and **92%** of adults were motivated because protecting their oral health enables them to live a healthier lifestyle.

The percentage of adults who keep up with recommended brushing, mouthwash and flossing usage standards



77%
brush twice a day



74%
use mouthwash once a day

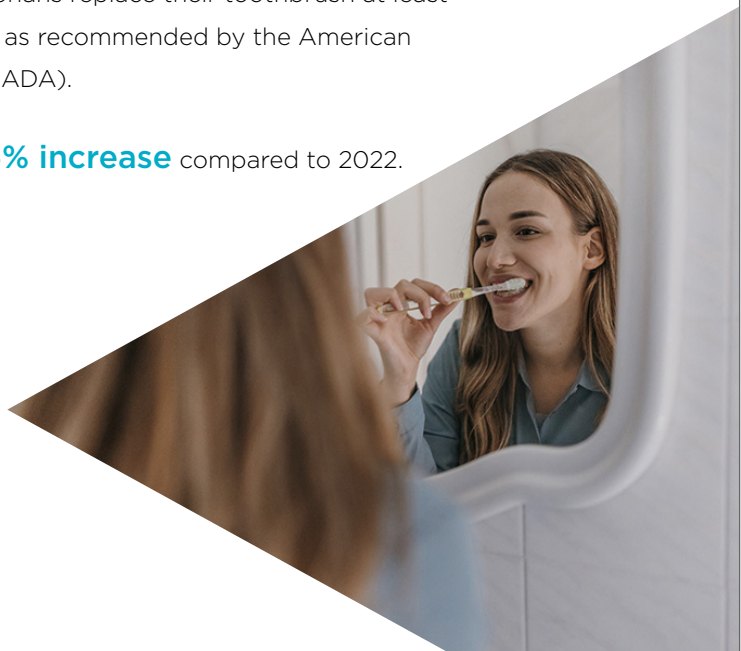


80%
floss once a day

They're also making sure the products they use are in good condition by keeping their toothbrushes fresh, another example of good oral health habits.

70% of Arizonans replace their toothbrush at least every three months, as recommended by the American Dental Association (ADA).

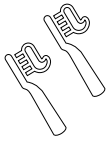
This represents a **15% increase** compared to 2022.



Parents are making sure their children adhere to the recommended oral care guidelines

Most children in Arizona brush at least twice a day, floss at least once a day, and use mouthwash once a day. 1 in 3 parents replace their child's toothbrush at least once a month, going above and beyond ADA recommendations.

The percentage of children who keep up with recommended brushing, mouthwash and flossing usage standards



69%
Brush twice a day



50%
Use mouthwash once a day



55%
Floss once a day

96% of Arizona parents think their child's oral health is important to their overall health.



While Arizonans are committed to instilling good oral hygiene habits with their children, there's still room for improvement. They claim the most common pitfalls are their child:



Does not floss enough **(40%)**



Does not brush their teeth enough **(34%)**



Eats too many sweets **(32%)**

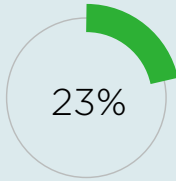
87% of Arizona households are visited by the Tooth Fairy

\$5.47 is the average amount left by the Tooth Fairy for each tooth

We all know that the Tooth Fairy is one of the most powerful tools parents and caregivers can use to calm any fears around losing baby teeth. The Tooth Fairy is also a great way to get kids excited about the importance of oral health and introduce them to all the ways that a healthy mouth supports a healthy body. Families may want to reinforce great brushing and flossing routines via a note from the tooth fairy as well as open lines of communication with their children about even bigger topics, like responsible savings, or how different cultures have their own special traditions.



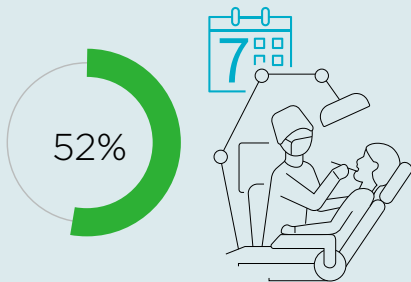
Heather Schneider, DMD
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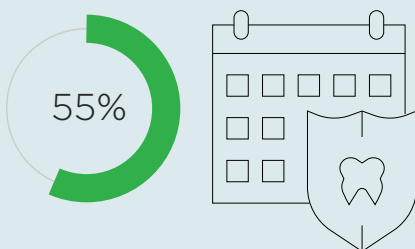
Only 23% of Arizonans that made preventive dentist visits also need reactive visits.

Reducing the likelihood of encountering future health issues is a common priority for many adults, leading them to prioritize preventive care.

About half of Arizonans schedule their preventive checkup at the time of their past appointment (52%).



5 out of 10 Arizonans sought preventive care because their dental insurance covers at least one annual visit and cleaning (55%).



Prevention remains the leading driver of dental visits in Arizona, though there was a notable increase in cosmetic visits

Regular preventive dental visits are crucial for maintaining good oral health.

The results are clear, as approximately 62% of adults in Arizona who maintained regular dental office visits said they did so to reduce their chances of unexpected care in the future.

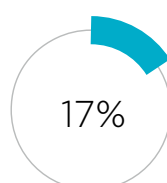
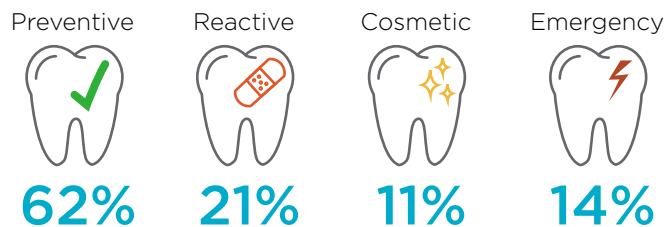


Prevention also motivates Arizonans to take their children to the dentist.

Among those who took their child to the dentist in 2022, approximately 5 in 6 parents (83%) report that most of the dental visits were preventive. On the other hand, approximately 1 in 6 (18%) say they took their child for an unexpected visit.

Three-quarters of Arizonans (76%) made it to the dentist in 2022. Adults seeking cosmetic care increased by 11% over the prior year.

Types of Visits Made

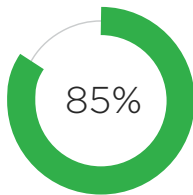


17% of Arizonans plan to visit the dentist in 2023 for cosmetic care.

Dental insurance is essential, and the benefits go far beyond healthy teeth and gums



For Arizonans, dental insurance is as important as ever, with the vast majority of Arizonans considering it an important part of overall wellness.



85% of adults agree that having dental insurance is essential to protecting oral and overall health

The benefits of dental insurance are extremely clear, including health, financial and emotional well-being.

Currently, about 7 in 10 (69%) Arizonans have dental insurance, while 83% of parents report their child is covered. And while most (91%) believe that having coverage affords them good oral health, many cite a variety of additional benefits ranging from peace of mind, to helping with consistent dentist visits, to being happy with the way they look.

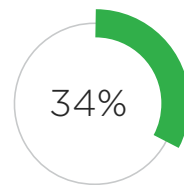
Top dental insurance benefits



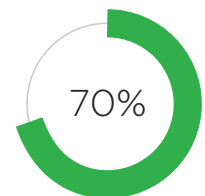
Cost and affordability continue to be the biggest barriers for Arizonans who don't have dental insurance. Nearly 2 in 5 (38%) of those without dental coverage claim it is

because they cannot afford the monthly payment, while more than one-third (39%) cite inability to afford additional out-of-pocket costs.

In the end, the pros of better overall health, peace of mind and avoiding unexpected costs outweigh the cons for a sizable portion of those currently without benefits who expect to enroll in the future.



Adults currently without dental benefits who are likely to enroll within the next 12 months

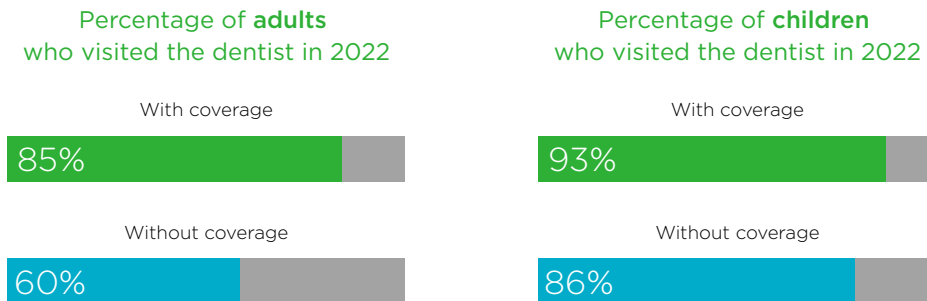


Parents who don't have dental benefits for their child hope to enroll in the next 12 months

Arizonans make a clear connection to tangible cost benefits to their dental insurance plans

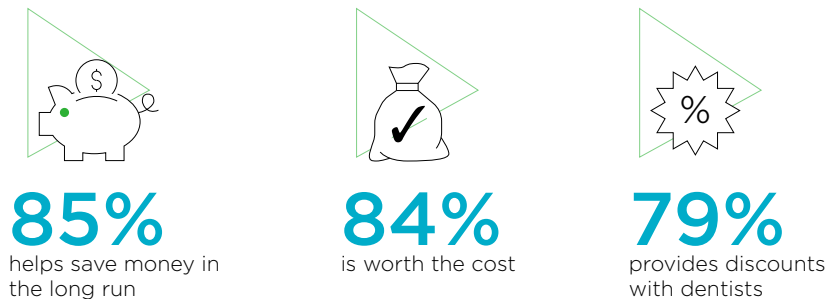
The results are evident – dental insurance is critical in helping Arizonans seek oral care from their dentist.

Adults and children with dental benefits were more likely to have visited the dentist in 2022 to seek preventive care than those without coverage.



Further, most people make a clear connection to tangible cost benefits to their dental insurance plans. Adults say dental insurance helps save money in the long run, is well worth the cost and provides pre-negotiated discounts with dentists.

Top cost benefits of dental insurance



The oral health outlook for 2023 is poised for continued improvement as adults and children maintain good oral health habits and continue with regular, preventive dental visits. Dental coverage is critical to supporting good oral health and well-being, which will help lead greater overall health outcomes for all.

This report emphasizes the vital importance of having dental insurance to attain excellent oral health and overall well-being. It is crucial to diminish obstacles to dental care in order to promote greater equity in oral health and enhance the overall health of everyone. Delta Dental of Arizona is dedicated to playing a role in overcoming these obstacles, thus enabling everyone to experience improved health and well-being. Our aim is to pave the way towards better health and wellness for all.



Michael Jones
 President & CEO,
 Delta Dental of Arizona

About the research

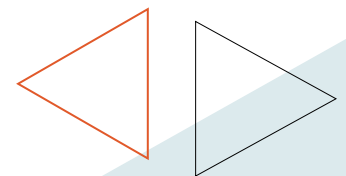
Delta Dental of Arizona commissioned a third-party market research firm, Material Holdings, LLC, to undertake research that formed the basis for this report. Material conducted its research between June 20 and July 13, 2023, using an e-mail invitation and an online survey of two audiences recruited through an opt-in panel:

- 300 Arizonans ages 18+
- 300 Arizona parents of children 12 and under

Research in this report has a margin of error of +/- 3%.

The generational categories referred to in this report are defined by the following:

- Gen Z: individuals born between 1997 and 2005
- Millennials: individuals born between 1981 and 1996
- Gen X: individuals born between 1965 and 1980
- Boomers: individuals born between 1946 and 1964



About Delta Dental of Arizona

Delta Dental of Arizona is the leading dental benefits provider in Arizona, serving more than 1.3 million enrollees and more than 3,700 contracted dentists across the state. Passionate about oral health and its importance to generations of families, Delta Dental of Arizona has worked for 50 years to improve oral health by emphasizing preventive care and making dental coverage accessible to a wide variety of employers, groups and individuals. Since 2010, Delta Dental of Arizona, through its Foundation, gave over \$16 million to support oral health education and disease prevention programs for underserved and uninsured communities across the state. For more information about Delta Dental of Arizona, visit www.deltadentalaz.com.

Our mission: Creating
a path to better health
and wellness

Our vision: Healthier
lives for everyone

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