

THE ORAL HEALTH EXPERT

Back to school means back to the dentist. We take a look at why dental visits are crucial to oral health and how to handle dual coverage.

DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA

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Seeing your family dentist before school starts

Each year, 100 million Americans forego a dental visit, and that's a big problem when it comes to maintaining a healthy smile.¹ Before your calendar fills up with school activities, athletic events and more, schedule routine dental appointments for your kids (and yourself!). No matter how good your oral hygiene habits are, a dental visit provides benefits that regular brushing and flossing can't, like removing tartar buildup.

Differences between plaque and tartar

Plaque is a colorless film of bacteria that sticks to teeth. These bacteria create acids that decay teeth and irritate gums. Luckily, plaque can be removed with daily brushing and flossing.² But when plaque stays on your teeth for too long, it hardens or calcifies³ along your gumline and forms tartar.⁴ Once this happens, regular brushing is not sufficient for removal, and that's bad news for your gums. By pushing your gums away from your teeth, tartar creates pockets that allow bacteria to grow. If tartar isn't removed with regular professional cleanings, it can cause gum disease, also known as periodontitis, and can even lead to tooth loss.⁵



How your teeth are cleaned at a dental appointment

During a routine cleaning, your dentist or hygienist uses a modified mirror to find unwanted residue and a metal instrument called a scaler to remove plaque and tartar. The scaler has a bladelike tip that allows them to scrape above and below your gumline as well as in between your teeth. They might also use a vibrating device called an ultrasonic scaler to shake plaque and tartar free. They can then wash away these bacteria with water. When they have sufficiently removed all plaque and tartar, they polish your teeth with an electric brush and polishing paste. The last step is a thorough flossing to make sure there's nothing hiding between your teeth.⁶

Visiting your dentist regularly is an essential part of your oral health routine. Not only will it keep your smile sparkling, but it will also help spot dental issues early before they progress into more costly problems. Take a moment to prepare your family for a school year full of smiles by scheduling dental appointments today.

Celebrate National Tooth Fairy Day on August 22!



The Tooth Fairy's so nice, we celebrate her twice! National Tooth Fairy Day occurs once in February and once this month – August 22, to be exact. To celebrate the tooth collector, visit theoriginaltoothfairypoll.com and answer a few questions about her habits at your house. We like to keep tabs on how much she leaves to see if she's spending more or less when compared to previous years.

Delta Dental's The Original Tooth Fairy Poll® has typically served as a good indicator of the economy's overall direction, tracking with the movement of Standard & Poor's 500 index (S&P 500) for 12 of the past 14 years. Our 2017 poll shows the Tooth Fairy hasn't quite been able to keep up with the market's hot pace—with an 11 percent cash payout decrease from 2016, while the S&P 500 saw a total return in 2017 of almost 18 percent.

Even though the average price of a tooth dropped to \$4.13 last year, the Tooth Fairy still paid out a healthy \$271 million for lost teeth across the nation. Those looking under their pillow for their first lost-tooth payout took far less of a hit, receiving an average \$5.70 per tooth, only a minor drop from 2016's \$5.72 first-tooth payout.

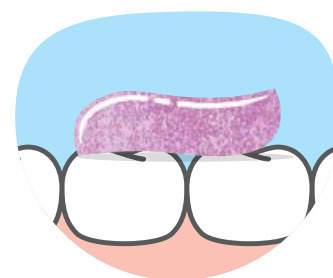
While we're talking Tooth Fairy, discussing her with your kids is the perfect way to remind them to practice good oral health habits. Let them know that the Tooth Fairy tends to be more generous when she finds healthy teeth under the pillow, and that brushing twice a day for two minutes and flossing at least once a day are the best ways to ensure that.

For tips on talking to your child about good oral health habits or for ideas on making the first Tooth Fairy visit extra-special, visit the Delta Dental of Arizona Blog at deltadentalazblog.com.

SMILE STATS



Despite the name, dual coverage doesn't double your benefits. If you have dual coverage, review your dental plan to see how it applies.



The gritty toothpaste dental professionals use as part of a cleaning is designed to polish teeth, giving you that just-visited-the-dentist shine.



In 2013, 1 in 3 adults reported not going to the dentist during the prior year.⁷ Make sure you visit the dentist regularly.

UNDERSTANDING THE INS AND OUTS OF DUAL COVERAGE



It's not uncommon to be covered by two dental benefits plans, which means that you have "dual coverage." If this applies to you or your family members, take a moment to learn how dual coverage works with these four key points.⁸

- 1 Understand your coordination of benefits (COB).**

Your COB is the way your two plans work together when you have dual coverage. The plan that pays first is called the "primary plan," while the one that pays second is called the "secondary plan." When your dental office sends a bill, they will address it to the primary plan provider. After the primary plan provider has paid, the remainder of the bill will be sent to your secondary plan provider. In some cases, the secondary plan may cover the rest of the bill.
- 2 Figure out which plan pays first.**

For kids, the primary plan provider can be determined in a couple of ways:




 - If you're currently married and your kids have dual coverage, their primary plan will be based on your and your spouse's birthdays. The parent whose birthday comes first in the year (regardless of birth year) will have the primary plan. For example, if your birthday is June 15th and your spouse's birthday is December 1st, yours would be the primary plan.
 - When parents are divorced, a child's primary plan typically comes from the parent with the largest portion of custody. It's best to check with your benefits provider because this may vary depending on your situation.
- 3 Don't expect double coverage.**

Dual coverage means your two benefits providers share costs in a pre-determined way – not that you receive double benefits. For example, both plans may cover two cleanings a year, but having dual coverage doesn't mean that you're now covered for four.
- 4 Know if your plan has a *non-duplication of benefits clause*.**

Some plans have a rule that prevents secondary plan coverage when the primary plan already paid as much or more than the secondary plan would have covered if it had been the primary plan. Check your plan information to see if your secondary plan has this rule before using your benefits.

With some quick research, you can handle dual coverage with ease and know what to expect after you visit the dentist.

MOUTH-HEALTHY RECIPE: SWEET POTATO CHIPS

Ingredients:	Directions:
 <p>1 large sweet potato, peeled</p>	<p>Preheat oven to 225 degrees F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Slice the sweet potato into thin, uniform chips. (If you're using a mandolin slicer with 3 thickness settings, choose the second setting.) Place the potato slices</p>
 <p>1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil</p>	<p>on the baking sheets in a single layer and lightly brush them with oil. Season evenly with salt. Bake for 60 to 90 minutes until the chips are crispy. Flip chips</p>
 <p>1/4 teaspoon salt</p>	<p>to the other side after 30 minutes. Allow the chips to cool for 5 minutes before serving. Store leftovers in an airtight container.⁹</p>

WANT MORE ORAL HEALTH TIPS AND NEWS?

VISIT THE DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA BLOG

deltadentalazblog.com



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SOURCES

¹<https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/dental-care-concerns/questions-about-going-to-the-dentist>

²<https://www.perio.org/consumer/difference-between-plaque-and-calculus>

³<http://oralhealth.deltadental.com/Search/22,HD28>

⁴<http://oralhealth.deltadental.com/Search/22,Delta144>

⁵<http://oralhealth.deltadental.com/Search/22,Delta144>

⁶<http://oralhealth.deltadental.com/Search/22,HD28>

⁷<http://news.gallup.com/poll/168716/one-third-americans-haven-visited-dentist-past-year.aspx>

⁸<http://grinmag.com/documents/winter-2016.pdf>

⁹<https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/thanksgiving-slideshow>