



CHECK UP

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Coming Soon Online Enrollment Enhancements

Delta Dental of Massachusetts will soon be offering enhanced real-time online enrollment for Benefits Administrators. In the past, accounts were able to submit online enrollment and termination information to Delta Dental, but now they will be able to make important enrollment changes instantly—in real-time. Watch for additional details on the launch!

By offering true, real-time online enrollment via our e-Quest services, benefits administrators can now make member changes and immediately verify that those changes are effective.

Specifically, Benefits Administrators will be able to:

- Add new subscribers and dependents to their company's dental plan.
- Edit subscriber and dependent information, such as name, date of birth, address, and coverage type.
- Terminate coverage for an individual employee, an entire family, or individual dependents covered under an employee's plan.
- Generate a report showing all transactions made using the online enrollment tool.

We always strive to make your and our members' experience with Delta Dental an efficient and pleasant one. We are convinced that our enhanced online enrollment features will add an even higher level of convenience to your interaction with us, while providing fast and convenient service to your employees. Please contact your Delta Dental Representative if you have any questions regarding our e-Quest online features.



Special note to Benefits Administrators who submit enrollment information via the electronic file format:

If you normally submit your company's enrollment information via electronic file, you can use this application to add, terminate and edit changes to subscriber and dependent information. Please remember that you must also make the change to your electronic file so that it matches the information you enter using the online enrollment application. If the information doesn't appear on your next file, any transactions made using the online enrollment application will be overwritten when we process your company's electronic file transmission.

MINIMIZING CANCER'S ORAL COMPLICATIONS

Oral health complications are common in cancer patients. Almost all patients receiving head and neck radiation are affected. Additionally, about 75% of blood and bone marrow transplant recipients and 40% of patients receiving chemotherapy experience them during therapy or after cancer treatment ends.

Side effects can include:

- ◆ Mucositis (inflammation of the mucous membranes in the mouth)
- ◆ Mouth infections (which can spread throughout the body through the bloodstream)
- ◆ Changes in children's dental growth and development
- ◆ Malnutrition and dehydration (caused by inability to eat and drink)
- ◆ Tooth decay and gum disease
- ◆ Taste changes
- ◆ Dry mouth



To mitigate these complications, it is important for cancer patients to work with their oncologist and dentist to develop an oral care plan. Ideally, patients should schedule an oral evaluation with their dentist before cancer treatment begins to reduce and limit severe oral complications, identify and treat existing infections, and develop an individualized oral hygiene plan. Your dentist can work with you to prevent, detect, and care for complications during your cancer treatment. He or she can provide topical anesthetics or analgesics as appropriate for oral pain.

Patients are advised to:

- ◆ Gently brush teeth, gums and tongue with an extra soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste, softening the bristles in warm water first
- ◆ Avoid mouthwashes containing alcohol
- ◆ Use fluoride gel as instructed
- ◆ Rinse the mouth several times a day with a rinse prescribed by your physician or dentist; if you have not been prescribed a rinse, a baking soda and salt solution is a helpful alternative (1 cup warm water, 1/4 teaspoon baking soda, and 1/8 teaspoon salt)
- ◆ Avoid sugar-laden candy, gum, and soda; avoid tobacco products, alcohol, and spicy or acidic foods

Radiation and chemotherapy frequently cause dry mouth, which can make it difficult to taste, chew, swallow, and speak. Without enough saliva, you can develop tooth decay or other infections in the mouth. To treat dry mouth, sip water frequently, suck on ice chips or sugar-free candy, chew sugar-free gum, and, if recommended by your dentist, use a saliva substitute spray or gel or a prescribed saliva stimulant.

For additional information about oral complications of cancer and its treatment, and ways to guard against these complications, visit the National Cancer Institute's website at www.cancer.gov/cancertopics.

(Source: Group Insurance Commission)

Minimizing Tooth Decay through the Use of Straws

According to a report in the June 2005 issue of *General Dentistry*, drinking soft drinks and other beverages through a properly positioned straw can help to minimize the risk of cavities. The report tracked patient drinking habits and found that different factors—such as the frequency of sipping and the amount of time the beverage remains in the mouth—affect the type, location, and severity of tooth decay. For example, decay will be concentrated in the back molars of a person who drinks directly from a can. Or, decay will be found on the teeth in the front of the mouth in a person who drinks through a straw positioned at the front of the mouth, right behind the lips. "Your best option is to sip soft drinks and other beverages through a straw positioned towards the back of the mouth," advises Mohamed A. Bassiouny, DMD, MSc, PhD, and lead reporter. "Doing so will limit the amount of time the beverage is in contact with the teeth."

(PR Newswire, June 20, 2005)

They are sticky, sweet, and a favorite Halloween treat.

They are sticky, sweet and a favorite Halloween treat. But raisins also appear to prevent cavities and gum disease.

Researchers at the University of Illinois at Chicago have determined that compounds found in raisins fight bacteria in the mouth that cause cavities and gum disease. "Our laboratory analyses showed that phytochemicals in this popular snack food suppressed the growth of oral bacteria associated with caries and gum disease," said Christine Wu, professor and associate dean for research at the UIC College of Dentistry and lead author of the study, in a news release announcing the findings.

Phytochemicals are compounds found in higher plants. Seedless raisins contain five of these chemicals that inhibit two types of

nasty bacteria, including Streptococcus mutans, which causes cavities, and Porphyromonas gingivalis, which causes



periodontal disease. The findings counter a longstanding public perception that raisins promote cavities. "Raisins are perceived

as sweet and sticky, and any food that contains sugar and is sticky is assumed to cause cavities," Wu said. "But our study suggests the contrary. Phytochemicals in raisins may benefit oral health by fighting bacteria that cause cavities and gum disease."

Raisins contain mainly fructose and glucose, not sucrose, the main culprit in oral disease. "Foods that are sticky do not necessarily cause tooth decay. It is mainly the added sugar, the sucrose, that contributes to the problem," Wu said.

The study findings were presented at the annual meeting of the American Society for Microbiology in Atlanta.

Important Member Information Regarding Recementing Crowns

WHAT IS A CROWN?

A "crown" or "cap" fits over a natural tooth to restore a part that was broken or decayed. The design of the underlying tooth is critical to the success of the crown remaining in place. A well prepared tooth and a well fitting crown should last many years. Occasionally, a crown is dislodged from the tooth by accident and has to be cemented again. This is a covered benefit for Delta Dental of Massachusetts members. If the crown continues to loosen and falls off, then that is a sign of an underlying problem with the crown itself or the tooth preparation. For this reason, the recementing of a crown is covered only once, and any further problems with the retention of a crown should be addressed directly with the dentist that placed it. Recementing an ill fitting crown invites decay and gum irritation to the underlying tooth, so follow-up is very important.

WHAT IS DELTA DENTAL OF MASSACHUSETTS' POLICY REGARDING CROWN RECEMENTING COVERAGE?

The recementing of a crown is a covered procedure once per tooth. It is disallowed if performed by the same dentist that placed the crown within the first six months following cementation. After Delta Dental of Massachusetts has covered one recementing, all future claims for that crown will be denied.

Please attach the enclosed Policy Rider Number 243 to your Delta Dental Certificate.

MarketPlace News

Tooth Whiteners and Healing

Tooth whiteners that could enhance teeth's natural healing ability may soon be available in over-the-counter gels and strips, according to a dental researcher who shared his team's latest findings today at the American Dental Association's national media conference. According to Frederick Eichmiller, D.D.S., director of the American Dental Association's Paffenbarger Research Center (PRC) in Gaithersburg, MD, PRC scientists have created a "white with might" whitening formula that contains tooth remineralization agents. Dr. Eichmiller explained that whitening can often open naturally occurring pores within teeth. These open tooth pores can cause temporary sensitivity to air as well as hot and cold food and drinks, a common side effect from tooth whitening. Saliva contains minerals teeth need to heal themselves by closing these pores, but this process is slow. The "white with might" whitening formula replenishes essential minerals in teeth as it whitens, resulting in far fewer side effects for consumers.

(E-Dental.com, June 8, 2005)



Advice from Dr. Doyle Williams—Dental Director

Please share this important information from our Dental Director

“Look Mom, No Cavities”



Delta's Dental Director
Dr. Doyle Williams

“Look Mom, No Cavities”. Fifty years ago, this Crest toothpaste advertising phrase was used to promote the benefits of fluoride in preventing decay. Dentists explain that the way fluoride works is it is absorbed into teeth and hardens them so decay is less likely to occur. In addition, the fluoride also

attacks early decay and helps the tooth re-mineralize or “heal” itself.

Early decay is caused by the acid in plaque that sticks to our teeth and weakens the enamel. There is a natural sweetener that can reduce the acid and greatly reduce dental decay; it is called xylitol.

Xylitol is a natural sweetener found in fruits and berries (high in cranberries) and added to everyday products such as chewing gum and toothpaste. Studies have shown that children who chew xylitol sweetened gum have up to 90% fewer cavities than those who don't. Start looking for products containing xylitol and reduce your chances for new decay. Carefree Koolerz gum and Crest MultiCare toothpaste are just two of the products containing xylitol you may see.

So in addition to the catch phrase of “Look Mom, No Cavities, I use Crest toothpaste,” we might hear advertisers start saying, “Look Mom, No Cavities, I drink cranberry juice every day” or “Look Mom, No Cavities, I chew xylitol gum after meals.”

The best advice for healthy teeth and gums and fewer cavities is to limit our intake of sweets, brush and floss daily with a fluoride toothpaste and eat foods containing xylitol.



Crest is a registered trademark of Procter & Gamble Company.

Carefree is a registered trademark of the Hershey Company.