



Smile Smart for Your Health

Those eligible for additional benefits through Delta Dental of South Dakota's Smile Smart Program include:

- People with periodontal (gum) disease.
- People with diabetes.
- Pregnant women.
- People with high-risk cardiac conditions.
- People with kidney failure or who are undergoing dialysis.
- People undergoing cancer-related chemotherapy and/or radiation.
- People with suppressed immune systems due to organ transplant, stem cell (bone marrow) transplants or those with HIV positive status.
- People at risk for oral cancer.

Delta Dental of South Dakota's Smile Smart for Your Health enhanced benefits program integrates medical and dental care - customizing benefits at the individual level by offering services to people with specific health conditions that can be positively affected by additional oral health care. Delta Dental enrollees with diabetes, pregnancy, periodontal disease, high-risk cardiac conditions, kidney failure/dialysis, suppressed immune systems or cancer-related chemotherapy and/or radiation all qualify for additional services. The program also includes benefits to aid in the fight against oral cancer.

Benefits for People with Periodontal (Gum) Disease

For enrollees with periodontal disease or periodontal surgery, periodontal maintenance needs to be conducted more frequently than the traditional two cleanings per year. The additional cleanings are more economical than periodontal surgery, and they help maintain overall health and reduce tooth loss compared to periodontal patients who do not receive these therapies. Enrollees with periodontal disease are eligible for four teeth cleanings, either prophylaxis (general cleaning) or periodontal maintenance, in a benefit year.

Benefits for People with Diabetes

The relationship between diabetes and oral health, specifically periodontal disease, is recognized by both the medical and dental communities. Research has confirmed that diabetes worsens with periodontal disease, and it strongly suggests that severe periodontal disease increases the severity of diabetes. A number of studies show that when diabetics receive professional teeth cleanings, their blood glucose levels are much better controlled. Enrollees with diabetes are eligible for four teeth cleanings, either prophylaxis (general cleaning) or periodontal maintenance, in a benefit year.

Benefits for Pregnant Women

Scientific evidence indicates that women with periodontal disease may be more likely to give birth to premature babies. Some studies have shown that a significant percentage of the 250,000 premature, low birth weight infants born in the United States each year may be attributed to infectious oral disease. Clinical studies of pregnant women with periodontal disease suggest that more frequent professional teeth cleanings may benefit the health of both baby and mother. Pregnant enrollees are eligible for one additional prophylaxis (general cleaning) or periodontal maintenance visit during the time of the pregnancy.

Benefits for People with High-Risk Cardiac Conditions

A recent guideline released by the American Heart Association indicates that maintaining good oral health may be an important factor in avoiding infective endocarditis. Infective endocarditis occurs when bacteria, often from the mouth, enters the bloodstream and attacks the lining of the heart. The Smile Smart benefit was developed to help at-risk individuals better maintain their oral health in an effort to lower their risk for infective endocarditis. People with high-risk cardiac conditions are eligible for four teeth cleanings, either prophylaxis (general cleaning) or periodontal maintenance, in a benefit year. Conditions include: a history of infective endocarditis; certain congenital heart defects such as having one ventricle instead of the normal two; individuals with artificial heart valves; heart valve defects caused by acquired conditions like rheumatic heart disease; hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, which causes abnormal thickening of the heart muscle; individuals with pulmonary shunts or conduits; and mitral valve prolapse with regurgitation (blood leakage).

Benefits for People with Kidney Failure or who are Undergoing Dialysis

According to the National Kidney Foundation, one out of nine Americans has chronic kidney disease. Dental infections increase the risk of systemic infection in people with kidney disease, and systemic infection increases the risk of serious side effects. These individuals may benefit from having their teeth cleaned professionally at more frequent intervals to reduce the buildup of bacteria in the mouth. People with kidney failure or who are undergoing dialysis are eligible for four teeth cleanings, either prophylaxis (general cleaning) or periodontal maintenance, in a benefit year.

Benefits for People Undergoing Cancer-Related Chemotherapy and/or Radiation

People undergoing chemotherapy and/or radiation are at increased risk for infection because their immune system response has been weakened. Head and neck radiation cause some specific oral health

problems. According to the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR), prevention of problems in the mouth is critical to obtaining the maximum benefit from cancer treatment, and people are encouraged to see a dentist before beginning treatment. Because a common side effect of head and neck radiation is increased cavities, the NIDCR recommends fluoride treatment and the use of prescription-strength fluoride toothpaste for those undergoing this treatment. Prescription-strength fluoride toothpaste and mouth rinses are often covered by medical/prescription drug benefit plans. Enrollees who are undergoing cancer-related chemotherapy and/or radiation are eligible for four teeth cleanings, either prophylaxis (general cleaning) or periodontal maintenance, in a benefit year. Enrollees are also eligible for fluoride applications.

Benefits for People with Suppressed Immune Systems

It is well established scientifically that people with serious health conditions like HIV positive status and organ failure are at increased risk for infection generally because of their weakened immune system. These individuals may benefit from having their teeth cleaned professionally at more frequent intervals to reduce the build up of bacteria in the mouth. Enrollees who have suppressed immune systems due to HIV positive status, organ transplant, and/or stem cell (bone marrow) transplant are eligible for four teeth cleanings, either prophylaxis (general cleaning) or periodontal maintenance, in a benefit year. Enrollees are also eligible for fluoride applications.

Benefits to Help in the Fight against Oral Cancer

This year in the United States, 8,000 people will die from oral cancer and over 30,000 new cases will be diagnosed. The brush biopsy is a powerful tool in the early detection of oral cancer/precancerous cells and represents a major breakthrough in the fight against oral cancer. The procedure is used to evaluate unexplained tiny white and red lesions. All Delta Dental of South Dakota plans cover the brush biopsy.