

Protecting the oral health of your patients

Making preventive care a priority



Improving oral health through preventive care

Delta Dental is dedicated to improving oral health, and we know that you share that same dedication. Our recent Preventive Dental Care Study, which included data from more than 96 million Delta Dental claims, found that many patients are not visiting you often enough to receive the preventive care they need.

The study revealed that **only half of adults with periodontal disease received the recommended two or more cleanings or periodontal maintenance appointments per year**, even though all of Delta Dental's benefit plans cover at least two such treatments per year. Additionally, we found that **30 percent of adults at higher-risk for tooth decay did not get a dental exam**.

We encourage you to make your patients that are at higher risk for disease aware of their preventive dental care benefits and talk to them about visiting regularly. At Delta Dental, we are committed to helping you deliver this message.

Looking out for mouths both big and small

Parents also need reminding that protecting their children's teeth is an important part of their overall health. Our study showed that many children aren't getting the preventive treatments they need, especially those at higher risk for tooth decay (one-third of children ages 6 to 18). Our data shows:

- 75 percent of kids under age 3 and 28 percent of kids ages 3 to 18 did not visit the dentist at all.

- 70 percent of higher-risk kids ages 6 to 18 did not have two fluoride treatments a year.
- 64 percent of higher-risk kids ages 6 to 8 did not get sealants on their first molars.
- 82 percent of higher-risk kids ages 10 to 14 did not get sealants on their second molars.

As you know, the American Dental Association recommends that children at higher risk for tooth decay should receive at least two professionally applied fluoride treatments per year, along with sealants on their first and second molars. Talk to parents about the importance of regular preventive care and remind them that these visits are usually quick, painless and covered at 100 percent.

Count on Delta Dental to help spread the word

At Delta Dental, prevention is a priority. Our study found that the oral health of children and adults can be better protected by increasing the utilization of preventive care benefits. With these findings, we are identifying ways to create plan designs and educational materials on the importance of oral health, with hopes that it will lead more patients to your chair and encourage increased use of evidence-based preventive care. Additionally, we encourage all groups offering dental benefits to select a plan that covers sealants and two fluoride treatments per year. Our oral health education website at oralhealth.deltadental.com is a great resource for patient education.