



HEALTH MATTERS

A PUBLICATION FOR TRICARE® BENEFICIARIES

The Dentist is In ...

Maintaining Oral Health at Home



COL Christensen Hsu
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As we continue to learn more about COVID-19, the health and safety of service members and their family members remains top of mind. Do you have a regular dental appointment coming up? If so, you should talk to your dentist about rescheduling it. The surgeon general has advised dentists and patients to delay elective (non-emergency) dental procedures—an action that can help slow the spread of the coronavirus and protect the health of patients, dental staff, and the community.

But while you practice social distancing, don't forget to do your part in practicing good dental hygiene, too. Here are some tips from the American Dental Association (ADA) for keeping your gums and teeth healthy while you're at home:

- Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Clean between teeth daily using string floss or a water flosser.
- Drink water with fluoride to help prevent cavities.
- Don't smoke or use other tobacco products. Tobacco increases problems with gum disease, tooth decay, and tooth loss. Smoking also increases your risk of lung and mouth cancers.
- Maintain a healthy diet that limits sugary beverages and snacks.

Your dental health can play a role in your overall health. By following the steps above, you can not only prevent oral diseases like tooth decay and gum disease, but also bacteria that can cause pneumonia and other conditions from entering into your body. Be sure to talk to your dentist if you have any health concerns so that he or she may help you.

Lastly, remember to keep healthy habits in mind. Wash your hands before you floss or brush your teeth. And, stay informed about the latest developments on COVID-19 (www.tricare.mil/coronavirus) so you can take precautionary measures as needed. For more oral health tips from ADA, visit www.mouthhealthy.org. To learn more about your dental benefit or to find a dentist in your area, visit www.uccitdp.com.

Thank you,

COL Christensen Hsu



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ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

Important Emergency Dental Care Information

The TDP will temporarily allow teledentistry as a mode of **emergency** dental diagnosis to assist TDP enrollees who are experiencing a dental emergency. **See page 2.**

Important Emergency Dental Care Information

Emergency Dental Care Options

To ensure the safety of both patients and dental staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, the American Dental Association (ADA) is requesting that all elective (non-emergency) dental procedures be postponed at this time.

In response, the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) will temporarily allow teledentistry as a mode of **emergency** dental diagnosis to assist CONUS TDP enrollees who are experiencing a dental emergency.

OCONUS TDP enrollees should check with their dental provider for teledentistry availability in their area. Allowing teledentistry as a mode of treatment means that TDP enrollees can receive an emergency dental diagnosis from the comfort of their home or current location.

So what should you do if you are experiencing a dental emergency?

1. Contact your dentist. The dentist can decide how to perform the emergency diagnosis (office visit or teledentistry).
2. Call United Concordia's dental emergency line at 1-800-858-0051.* A United Concordia customer service representative can help you find a dentist who can assist.

What's considered a dental emergency?

Dental emergency care includes any treatment necessary to relieve pain, treat infection, or control bleeding. According to the ADA, dental emergencies are "potentially life threatening and require immediate treatment to stop ongoing tissue bleeding [or to] alleviate severe pain or infection. Conditions include uncontrolled bleeding; cellulitis or a diffuse soft tissue bacterial infection with intraoral or extraoral swelling that potentially compromises the patient's airway; or trauma involving facial bones that potentially compromises the patient's airway."

Additional information on dental emergencies can be found on the [ADA website](#).

What are the guidelines for receiving dental care in my location during the pandemic?

In addition to ADA guidance, each state has its own guidance that is available in a [State by State guideline](#) that you should follow when seeking dental care in your area.

** United Concordia's dental emergency line is to be used for dental emergencies only. It is available from 6 p.m. Sunday to 10 p.m. Friday Eastern Time (ET).*

It's Important to Maintain Good Brushing and Flossing Habits at Home

We know that many of you are staying home during the COVID-19 pandemic and delaying your routine dental appointments until a safer time.

That's the right thing to do. It's also important to maintain your brushing and flossing at home to help maintain your oral health between dental appointments.

The American Dental Association recommends brushing at least twice a day and flossing to help keep your teeth and gums clean and healthy.

Visual Guide

Check out the instructional brushing and flossing videos on the TDP website at uccitdp.com. Select the "Dental Health Center" tab and then the "Oral Health Tips, Treatments, and Videos" section on the page. ★



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CHECK THIS OUT...

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5 Quick Tips

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- 1. Hands:** Wash them often.
- 2. Elbow:** Cough into it.
- 3. Face:** Keep your hands away from it.
- 4. Feet:** Keep more than 6 feet away from others.
- 5. Feel sick?** Stay at home.

Learn more about COVID-19 and ways to protect yourself at www.cdc.gov.



TRICARE DENTAL PROGRAM RESOURCES

www.uccitdp.com

ENROLLMENT AND BILLING SERVICES

1-844-653-4061 (CONUS)

1-844-653-4060 (OCONUS)

1-717-888-7400 (OCONUS)

711 (TDD/TTY)

CLAIMS FILING

CONUS:
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<https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil>