



HEALTH MATTERS

A PUBLICATION FOR TRICARE® BENEFICIARIES

The Dentist is In ...

Help Children Develop Good Oral Health Habits



U.S. Air Force Col.
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Good oral health habits should start young. Parents play a crucial role in helping their children prevent oral health issues by teaching them good habits at a young age.

Here are some oral health tips for children of all ages.

Babies and Toddlers: Once those little teeth start coming in, it's time to start brushing. Children should brush twice a day with a soft-bristled toothbrush. Try brushing your teeth with your child. Use matching toothbrushes, sing songs, or play brushing games to make brushing fun. Also, help your children floss at least once a day to reach places their toothbrush can't.

Young Children: Most children begin to lose their baby teeth at age 6 or 7, when permanent teeth break through. This is a crucial time for you to actively aid and encourage your kids to keep up good dental habits. Make sure your child visits the dentist regularly. The TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) covers two routine dental checkups in a consecutive 12-month period.

Encourage a diet that's rich in calcium, fruits, and vegetables to help incoming teeth. Continue to lend a hand to your child with brushing and flossing until the age of 12. The American Dental Association recommends the 2/2 rule: brush for two minutes in the morning and again at night with a soft-bristled toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste.

Teenagers: By now, your child is brushing on his or her own. Remind them to brush at least twice a day. Teach them to choose healthier alternatives to soft drinks, energy drinks, and juice.

For more oral health tips for kids, visit www.mouthhealthy.org. Also, be sure to talk to your dentist if you have questions. To learn more about your dental benefit or to find a dentist in your area, visit www.uccitdp.com.

Thank you,

Col. Linda Coates



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ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

What to Know About Preventive Dental Care

Forgetting to visit the dentist can have a seriously negative impact on your overall oral health. **See page 2.**

Answering Questions About Your Child's Oral Health Coverage

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Tobacco and Your Oral Health

Tobacco products can negatively impact your oral health in several ways. **See page 6.**

What to Know About Preventive Dental Care

These days, it can be easy to forget to make an appointment to see the dentist for a routine checkup. Maybe you brush twice and floss every day. Maybe your teeth look and feel healthy. Isn't that enough? But forgetting to visit the dentist can have a seriously negative impact on your overall oral health.

"Regular dentist visits are quite important to your oral health," said Doug Elsesser, program analyst with the Defense Health Agency's TRICARE Dental Program. "Routine cleanings can remove what even thorough brushing can't, and that can help prevent cavities and gum disease."

The TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) covers a wide range of dental services, including preventive care.

What is preventive dental care?

Preventive dental care is the care that helps you maintain good oral health. It's a proactive approach to dental care. Through regular cleanings and other treatments, your dentist works to stop tooth and gum problems before they arise.

What preventive care options does TDP cover?

As outlined in the *TRICARE Dental Program Handbook*, covered services for TDP enrollees include:

- **Teeth Cleanings:** TDP covers two routine dental cleanings in a consecutive 12-month period. However, a third routine cleaning may be covered if you're pregnant or have a chronic medical condition. According to the American Dental Association, cavity prevention is especially crucial for new moms. Even the simple act of sharing a spoon could transfer those bacteria into your baby's mouth.
- **Fluoride Treatment:** TDP covers two topical fluoride treatments in a consecutive 12-month period for ages 1 and up.
- **Space Maintainers:** TDP covers space maintainers for children under age 19. Space maintainers are designed to manage premature baby tooth loss. Maintainers also help prevent misalignment of teeth, overcrowding, and other orthodontic conditions.

- **Space Maintainer Care:** TDP also covers the care of space maintainers for children.
- **Sealants:** A sealant is a protective material your dentist may put on the tops of the teeth in the back of your mouth (usually the molars) to prevent cavities. TDP covers sealants on permanent molars for children through age 18.

What are my costs?

With the TDP, your cost-share depends on the type of dental service you get and your sponsor's pay grade. For covered preventive dental services performed by a network dentist, there aren't any out-of-pocket costs. However, you may have to pay other fees if you see a non-network dentist. Keep in mind, TDP covers two routine teeth cleanings and topical fluoride treatments in a consecutive 12-month period. Go to www.uccitdp.com for more information on benefits, exclusions, and limitations.

Brushing and flossing alone aren't enough to protect your teeth. Learn more about preventive dental services and other covered services on the TDP website (www.uccitdp.com). You can also refer to the *TRICARE Dental Program Handbook* (www.tricare.mil/publications). ★





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Have Questions? Check These Dental Resources for Answers

The TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) benefits can help you maintain good dental health and prevent tooth and gum problems before they start. Besides regular dental checkups, the TDP also covers dental procedures that can help fix existing problems. The TDP is simple, cost-effective, and convenient.

Do you have questions about TDP? Here are two resources that you can download at the TRICARE Publications page at www.tricare.mil/publications.

Be sure to explore additional TDP resources at www.uccitdp.com. If you have coverage questions, you can also contact United Concordia. See page 8 for contact information. ★

TRICARE Dental Program Handbook

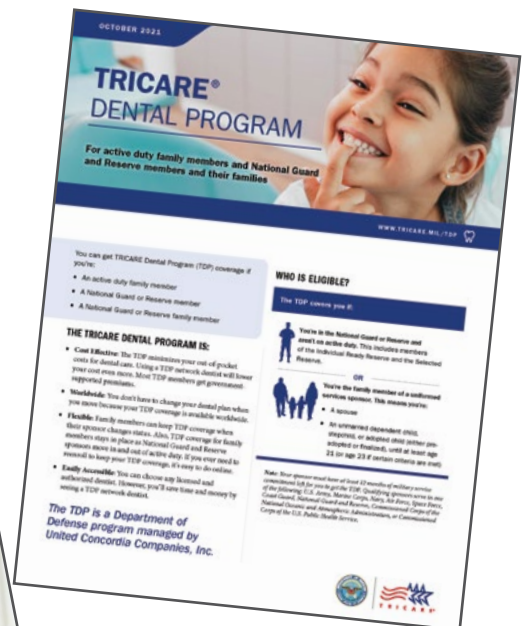
This handbook is a comprehensive guide for TDP enrollees. Refer to the handbook for information about:

- Benefits and exclusions
- Finding a dentist
- Costs and fees
- Orthodontic services
- Filing claims
- Traveling and moving
- Stateside and overseas contact information



TRICARE Dental Program Benefit Brochure

This brochure is a resource to help you quickly become familiar with TDP and what it offers. It provides a brief overview of TDP, including eligibility, enrollment, plan options, and costs.



Answering Questions About Your Child's Oral Health Coverage

Taking care of your child's oral health can be a stressful task. The decisions you make can affect their oral health for a lifetime. The TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) is here to help you make the right decisions about your child's oral health care.

You may have questions about how to use TDP to best care for your child's teeth and gums. Here are some Q&As about your child's dental coverage.

When should my child first see the dentist?

The American Dental Association recommends children should first visit the dentist within six months of the child's first tooth appearing, but no later than the child's first birthday. Children under age 1 may be enrolled in TDP at any time. TDP covers two routine cleanings and two fluoride treatments during a consecutive 12-month period for children age 1 and older.

How often can my child go to the dentist for a routine cleaning and checkup?

Your child can visit the dentist for routine checkups and cleanings twice within a consecutive 12-month period.

How do I know if my child's dental service is covered?

Always check with your dentist on treatments, and request a predetermination when you need to know whether or not a procedure is covered. A predetermination is a claim that the dentist submits before any services are actually rendered for a proposed treatment plan for covered services. This will help you learn how much you'll be expected to pay for specific dental care. For information on coverage, check the *TRICARE Dental Program Handbook* at www.tricare.mil/publications. You can also call United Concordia or go to *My Account* at www.uccitdp.com. Learn more about *My Account* on page 5.

Do I have to register my child in DEERS?

Yes, you must first register your child in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) before the child receives TDP coverage. United Concordia uses DEERS to verify eligibility for dental benefits. This is true for any TRICARE program. Visit www.tricare.mil/deers to learn more.

When will my adult child lose eligibility?

Adult children of a TRICARE sponsor will typically lose their TDP coverage after they turn age 21. However, there are exceptions. To remain eligible for TDP benefits after age 21, your adult child must be unmarried and enrolled full-time at an approved institution of higher learning. Also, the child must be receiving at least 50% of financial support from their sponsor.

Adult children age 21 and older who attend college remain eligible for TDP coverage until the last day of the month in which they turn age 23, or when their education or college enrollment ends.

As outlined in the *TRICARE Dental Program Handbook*, unmarried children who have a disabling illness or injury that occurred before their 21st birthday also remain eligible for TDP benefits until age 23. The same is true for adults who experience an illness or injury between ages 21 and 23 while attending an approved institute of higher learning. ★

Manage Your Coverage With TRICARE Dental Program ‘My Account’

Managing your dental coverage can be difficult and confusing. There is an online application to help you access, manage, and review all your TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) information in one place. It's called *My Account*.

What can you do with *My Account*? You can:

- Register with an applicable chronic medical condition so you can receive enhanced periodontal benefits through the “Manage My Wellness” section of *My Account*
- Register to receive dental-specific updates and wellness information
- Register to receive TDP important updates
- Review your benefits to make sure you're covered for dental procedures

- Go paperless by viewing your claim statements or dental explanations of benefits online
- View your messages from United Concordia
- Find a TDP network dentist near you if you live in the TDP CONUS service area; find a TRICARE OCONUS Preferred Dentist if you live in the TDP OCONUS service area
- Pay your bill one time or set up recurring payments (direct bill only; most TDP enrollees have an automatic sponsor payroll allotment for monthly premium payment)

Visit the TDP website at www.uccitdp.com to access *My Account*. First-time users can create an account by following the instructions for setting up an account on the page. Otherwise, log in to your *My Account* using your DS Logon. ★



Tobacco and Your Oral Health

There's a great deal of scientific information that proves using tobacco products is seriously harmful to your health. Nicotine products can increase your risks for cancer of the throat, lungs, and stomach. Also, tobacco products can negatively impact your oral health in several ways.

"Tobacco use can lead to gum disease," said Doug Elsesser, program analyst with the Defense Health Agency's TRICARE Dental Program. "Smoking or chewing tobacco makes it tougher for your body to fight infection, including in the gums."

The more you use tobacco in any form, the greater the risk of gum disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/fast-facts/tobacco-use/index.html). And gum disease may require you to get deeper, more invasive teeth cleanings, or even surgery. The bacteria from gum disease can also worsen existing chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and rheumatoid arthritis.

Besides gum disease, smoking and smokeless tobacco can have several other negative effects on your oral health. According to the American Dental Association (www.ada.org), tobacco use can also lead to:

- Tooth staining
- Loss of tooth enamel
- Gum tissue loss
- Tooth loss
- Oral lesions
- Oral cancer

Knowing these facts, you may want to quit tobacco. Or you may want to help a friend or family member quit. Keep in mind, quitting tobacco can be hard, and it may take several attempts. You may also need some support and resources to help you stay quit and get your health back on track.

For information on TRICARE's tobacco cessation services, you can check out the *TRICARE Tobacco Cessation Program Fact Sheet* at www.tricare.mil/publications. You can also review information about eligibility for covered services, including

tobacco cessation products and counseling, at www.tricare.mil/tobaccocessationservices.

The Department of Defense's tobacco education campaign, YouCanQuit2, also provides a wide range of tools to help you become tobacco-free. Visit www.ycq2.org to learn more.

Remember, talk with your dentist if you have any concerns about your teeth or gums. And if you use tobacco products, try to quit this year. ★



Q&A: Tips to Help You Find the Right TDP Network Dentist

Finding the right dentist is critical to your oral health. The dentist is more than just the person who cleans your teeth. They can spot tooth and gum issues before those issues become major problems. That's why the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) Find a Dentist tool makes it easy for you to find a dentist in your area.

However, you still may have some questions about choosing the right dentist within your health care network. Here are the answers to frequently-asked questions about the process.

Q: Why should I choose a network dentist?

A: As a TDP enrollee, you're free to visit any dentist. However, choosing a network dentist can save you money on dental services. A TDP network dentist has signed an agreement with United Concordia to follow TDP rules for providing care and accepting payments. The network dentist will also file claims on your behalf.

Q: If my dentist accepts TDP coverage, does that mean they're a TDP network provider?

A: No. A non-network dentist may accept payments from United Concordia, but hasn't agreed to accept United Concordia's allowance as payment in full for covered services (excluding any applicable cost-shares). This means the

non-network dentist can bill you for the difference between United Concordia's allowance and the dentist's total billed charge, if any. Make sure the dentist is a TDP network dentist before visiting to avoid additional out-of-pocket expenses.

Q: How do I find a network dentist in the continental U.S.?

A: If you're in the TDP CONUS service area, which includes the U.S., Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, you can use the online Find a Dentist tool (www.uccitdp.com/find-a-dentist) to help you find a network dentist in your area. You can search by last name, specialty, city, county, or ZIP code. You can also call United Concordia's TDP Customer Service Department. A customer service representative will work with you to locate a network dentist nearby.

Q: How can I find a dentist outside the continental U.S.?

A: If you live in the TDP OCONUS service area, you can get dental care from any licensed dentist. However, you might find it easier to see a TRICARE OCONUS Preferred Dentist (TOPD). A TOPD will:

- File claims for you
- Charge you only the cost-share at the time of service

- Complete and submit predeterminations for you before you get complex or costly treatment

Use the OCONUS Find a Dentist tool (www.uccitdp.com/tp2opd) to find a dentist near you.

Remember that your dentist might not know what TDP covers. You can find a full list of covered benefits by signing up for United Concordia's *My Account* on the TDP website. You can also refer to the *TRICARE Dental Program Handbook*. Check out your covered dental benefits before you head to the dentist. ★





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CHECK THIS OUT...

Find the Right TDP Network Dentist

The TDP Find a Dentist tool makes it easy for you to find a dentist in your area.
See page 7.



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TRICARE DENTAL PROGRAM RESOURCES

www.uccitdp.com

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1-717-888-7400 (OCONUS)

711 (TDD/TTY)

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