



HEALTH MATTERS

A PUBLICATION FOR TRICARE® BENEFICIARIES

The Dentist is In ...

How to Floss Better for Cleaner Teeth



U.S. Air Force Col.
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If you've ever been to the dentist, you've heard about the benefits of flossing. It can sometimes be difficult to start a flossing routine. But don't put it off. According to the National Institute of Health (www.nidcr.nih.gov/health-info/gum-disease), poor brushing and flossing habits can allow plaque—a sticky film of bacteria—to build up on your teeth. This buildup can lead to tooth decay, gingivitis, and gum disease.

Flossing cleans the spaces between teeth that a toothbrush can't reach. This helps break plaque before it can harden. It's important to floss at least once per day. Here are some tips to help improve your flossing.

- **Longer is better.** Use a piece of floss that's at least 18 inches or more. Wrap the unused floss around the middle and ring fingers of both hands. It's easier to navigate and control than a short piece of floss.
- **Be careful at the contact point.** A common mistake is to snap the floss through the contact area between the teeth. This can cause pain and damage the tissue between the teeth. It's better to use a sawing motion to slide the floss through the contact.
- **Floss by feel.** Many people try to floss in front of a mirror. But the reversed image can be confusing. It's difficult to coordinate your hands and eyes when the image is reversed. For some people, it's easier to navigate by feel rather than by sight. Try instead to floss just by feel. It helps to stick to the same flossing pattern and not skip around.
- **Alternatives to floss.** There are also other ways to remove plaque from between your teeth. You can try a water flosser, a floss holder, or interdental brushes.

Your dentist or dental hygienist can help you with your flossing technique. Ask for help during a checkup. The TRICARE Dental Program covers two routine dental checkups in a consecutive 12-month period. 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

Have Additional Dental Insurance?

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Sealants Defend Against a Child's Tooth Decay

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What to Do When You Lose a Tooth, Dental Crown, or Filling

Take these steps to help you keep your tooth, smile and great oral health. See page 7.

Seven Foods and Drink Culprits Behind Discolored Teeth



Did you know that certain foods and drinks can leave behind stained, discolored teeth? Although not all foods and drinks will leave you with stained teeth, many of them will. Below is a list of seven foods and drinks that can increase your risks of stained, discolored teeth.

Coffee and Tea

Coffee and tea are common culprits that can lead to stained and discolored teeth. As the American Dental Association (ADA) points out the combination of the acid and colors in coffee and tea can wear down the enamel of your teeth and eventually stain them.

Red Wine

Like tea, red wine is also acidic and contains colors—so you may want to limit consumption to keep your pearly

whites clean and bright. In fact, after a session of teeth whitening, the European Journal of Dentistry suggests avoiding red wine, tea and cola. And before you opt for white wine instead, you should know it can also stain your teeth.

Cola

Acidic and dark in color, cola is another culprit of stained teeth. Since soda isn't a healthy choice nutritionally, there are numerous reasons to avoid it. These drinks are loaded with sugar and calories but contain few (if any) beneficial nutrients. By giving up cola, your teeth and waistline will thank you.

Sports Drinks

The rich color of many sports drinks can also cause stains on teeth—not to mention that they're also a source of added sugar. To help avoid tooth

discoloration caused by sports drinks (and reduce your overall sugar intake), choose reduced sugar sports drinks that are light (preferably white or clear) in color.

Certain Fruits & Vegetables

Certain acidic fruits and vegetables, especially those dark in color, are also sources of tooth discoloration and erosion, according to the ADA. The ADA notes that the fruits and veggies to steer clear of in order to avoid discolored teeth include beets, berries, pickles, and fruit juices.

Colorful Sweets

You probably already know the added sugar in sweets is bad for your teeth. However, what you may not realize is that certain brightly colored candies, ice pops, and chocolates can cause tooth discoloration. That's just one more reason to steer clear of sweets in your regular diet.

Some Seasonings and Condiments

Research suggests there also are a few condiments and seasonings to shy away from when you want to avoid stained teeth, including curry, soy sauce, and tomato sauce. Due to its strong acidity and deep color, balsamic vinegar is also a culprit when it comes to discolored teeth. ★



Have Additional Dental Insurance? The TDP Will Coordinate Your Benefits

You may have other dental insurance in addition to your TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) coverage. This is quite common with military families who choose to have additional dental insurance through an employer. The good news is that if you have more than one plan, the TDP has processes to ensure seamless coordination of your benefits.

To make sure your TDP and other dental insurance plan's claims are paid properly, just let United Concordia know that you have an additional plan. It's easy! Go to www.uccitdp.com and select the "Forms & Materials" tab. Then scroll down and select the "Other Dental Insurance Coverage Questionnaire." Once you fill out the form, you can send it to United Concordia two ways:

1. **Email.** Attach the completed form to the "Contact Us" form located in the "Contact Us" tab at www.uccitdp.com.
2. **Mail.** Mail the completed form to:
TDP Customer Service
PO Box 69450
Harrisburg, PA 17106

If you need additional information, check the *TRICARE Dental Program Handbook* at www.uccitdp.com in the Forms & Materials tab. ★



Sealants Defend Against a Child's Tooth Decay

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 90% of children's cavities occur in the back teeth (premolars and molars), where rough grooves called pits and fissures cover the tooth surface, collecting bits of food and liquid that can attack tooth enamel. Daily brushing and flossing help remove food particles and bacteria from the smooth surfaces of the teeth, but pits and fissures are more difficult to keep clean because brush bristles cannot always reach into these tiny grooves.

Your dentist may suggest protecting your child's back teeth with dental sealants—plastic material that's applied to molars' chewing surfaces. Research indicates that dental sealants prevent tooth decay and can also stop decay in its earliest stages. Experts recommend that dental sealants be placed on children's molar teeth shortly after the teeth grow in. The first permanent molars come in around age 6, with the second set of permanent molars appearing in children around age 12.

Sealing the Teeth

The plastic material covers and seals the chewing surfaces of the teeth, acting as a barrier so that cavity-causing bacteria and acid cannot get into the pits and grooves of the teeth. Sealants

are easy for your child's dentist to apply, and it takes only a few minutes to seal each tooth.

First, the dentist will thoroughly clean your child's teeth and prepare the surface with a solution to make the plastic stick to the tooth enamel. The plastic is then painted on the tooth, where it attaches. The dentist may use a curing light to help the sealant harden. The procedure is completed in one short visit, and the benefits can last for years.

TDP Coverage

Dental sealants are covered under the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) on permanent molars through age 18. The teeth must be cavity-free and without fillings. One sealant per tooth is covered in a three-year period.

For details about sealants and other TDP benefits, visit www.uccitdp.com. ★



Are You Eligible for TDP Wellness Program Benefits?

If you or an enrolled family member have been diagnosed with a specific chronic condition or are pregnant, the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) Wellness Program is available to provide enhanced dental benefits at no cost to you. Getting the proper treatment and maintenance for gum disease will have a positive effect on your overall wellness.

Scientists continue to uncover connections between certain medical conditions and gum disease. The TDP Wellness Program is available for enrollees with the following medical conditions:

- Cerebral Vascular Disease (stroke)
- Coronary Artery Disease (heart)
- Diabetes
- Lupus
- Oral Cancer
- Organ Transplant
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Pregnancy

Confirm and Activate Your Coverage

To receive this enhanced coverage, you (or anyone on your dental plan) must report the covered condition via the My Account application on TDP's website: www.uccitdp.com.

Here's how:

1. Select the red "Log in to My Account" button at the top of this page and log in using your DS Logon. (Don't worry if you don't have a DS Logon, you can register on this page.)
2. Select "Manage My Wellness."
3. Add your medical condition.

Take Advantage of Your Benefits

Once registered, talk to your dentist about your medical condition and your additional coverage through the TDP. You may or may not need the extra services that are available, but your dentist can recommend which (if any) additional procedures can help your oral health. ★

Calcium: An Important Part of Your Overall Health

Calcium is the most abundant mineral found in the human body, making it an essential building block of our anatomy. Of this supply, 99% goes toward supporting the bones and teeth of our skeletal system. While milk is an obvious nutritional source of calcium, there are many other dietary options to enjoy.

Calcium is especially important for children and teens during the essential years of the body's growth. When children consume a calcium-rich diet, they're providing their body with the vital nutrients for strong bones and teeth.

Babies typically get calcium and other nutrients through breastmilk or formula, but children ages 1 to 3 need 700 milligrams (mg) of calcium through their diet daily, ages 4 to 8 require 1,000 mg and ages 9 to 13 need 1,300 mg. Adults with average dietary needs typically require 1,000 mg of calcium each day, but postmenopausal women may need an additional 200 mg.

Besides milk, there are many ways to incorporate calcium into your diet. Below are some ideas. ★

PLAIN, LOW-FAT YOGURT (8 OZ)	415 MG
PART-SKIM MOZZARELLA (1.5 OZ)	333 MG
SARDINES IN OIL (3 OZ)	325 MG
CALCIUM-FORTIFIED SOYMILK (8 OZ)	299 MG
FRESH COOKED KALE (1 CUP)	94 MG
REDUCED-FAT SOUR CREAM (2 TBSP)	31 MG
CALCIUM-FORTIFIED CEREAL (1 CUP)	UP TO 200 MG



What to Do When You Lose a Tooth, Dental Crown, or Filling

Lost a tooth? First, don't panic. But let's get that fixed.

A missing tooth can be distressing because it might affect how you look, but there's more to it than that. A pocket anywhere in your mouth can expose you to infections and other problems. Take these steps to help you keep your tooth, smile, and great oral health, and note that they apply only to adult (permanent) teeth:

1. Recover the tooth, if possible.
2. Hold it by the top, not the root, and gently rinse the root of the tooth with water, milk, or a saline solution. Don't scrub it or remove attached tissue.
3. In some cases, you can temporarily put it back in the empty socket to keep the root protected. Otherwise, place the tooth in a container of milk or saline solution (not water).
4. Immediately see your dentist or go to the emergency room with the tooth. The faster you get care, the better chance you have of your tooth being restored.

How to Care for a Lost Crown or Filling

1. Apply a small dab of petroleum jelly inside the crown.
2. Place the crown back on the tooth to create a temporary seal. Use over-the-counter temporary dental filling or orthodontic wax until you can see a dentist.
3. Avoid using that tooth.
4. See your dentist as soon as possible. Use the "Find a Dentist" tool at www.uccitdp.com if you need help locating an in-network provider.

NOTE: A temporary fix is just that—temporary. Your teeth can still decay and shift until a permanent filling or crown is placed, so see your dentist right away. ★



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CHECK THIS OUT...

Calcium: An Important Part of Your Overall Health

Appropriate calcium intake is crucial to maintaining good health. While milk is an obvious nutritional source of calcium, there are many other dietary options to enjoy. **See page 6.**

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Questions About Your Benefits? Get Answers in My Account

My Account is an online application where you can review and manage your TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) account. To begin, visit www.uccitdp.com and select the “My Account” button on the home page. From there, you’ll use your DS Logon to sign in. Don’t worry if you don’t have a DS Logon. The website will walk you through the process of getting one immediately.

The *My Account* application is available 24 hours a day and allows you to review your coverage, see your claim history, access your messages, register a chronic condition, or find a network dentist. ★

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:
 United Concordia
 TRICARE Dental Program
 P.O. Box 69451
 Harrisburg, PA 17106

OCONUS:
 United Concordia
 TRICARE Dental Program
 P.O. Box 69452
 Harrisburg, PA 17106

BENEFICIARY WEB ENROLLMENT

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