



# HEALTH MATTERS

A PUBLICATION FOR TRICARE® BENEFICIARIES

The Dentist Is In ...

## Get Relief for Your Sensitive Teeth



Col. James Honey  
Chief, TRICARE Dental  
Care Section  
Defense Health Agency

Do you cringe when someone offers you a hot beverage? Wince at the idea of licking an ice cream cone? If your teeth are sensitive, you aren't alone. A study in *The Journal of the American Dental Association* (ADA) showed that one in eight people struggle with pain from tooth sensitivity.

Dentin, the bony tissue underneath the tooth's enamel, contains small, hollow tubes. When these canals are exposed, they allow cold, hot, sticky or acidic food to reach the nerves inside the tooth. This can cause hypersensitivity.

If your teeth are sensitive, visit your dentist to make sure all is well in your mouth. Sensitivity can be a symptom of cavities, fractures, worn fillings, gum disease and more.

Your dentist can identify the cause of your discomfort and recommend treatment.

If your teeth are structurally sound, you might still experience sensitivity. You can treat your teeth with desensitizing toothpaste. This toothpaste can help block the transmission of sensation from the tooth surface to the nerve. Look for desensitizing toothpastes that carry the ADA Seal of Acceptance.

The best way to prevent hypersensitivity is with sound oral hygiene. This includes caring for your teeth by flossing once and brushing twice daily. Remember, if your teeth are sensitive, you don't have to suffer.

Learn more about what you can do to desensitize your teeth and keep your mouth healthy at the ADA's education resource at [www.mouthhealthy.org](http://www.mouthhealthy.org).

Thank you,  
Col. James Honey



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### ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

#### Bad Breath?

Bad breath is embarrassing, but pay attention: It could be a sign of a more serious health concern. See page 2.

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

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 oral health. See page 3.

#### Save Time by Using TDP's My Account

*My Account*, on [www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com), puts your dental history and claims at your fingertips. The online application has a cost estimator and other tools to help you manage your TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) benefits. See page 6.

## The TDP and Your Dentist Can Help

The TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) offers diagnostic services that help prevent gum disease and other dental problems. TDP members can get two routine dental examinations by the same provider, two routine cleanings and two fluoride treatments in a consecutive 12-month period at no cost when seeing a network dentist.

Regular dental checkups help prevent the buildup of plaque and bacteria. Your dentist will remove it if it's there.

Your provider can determine if your oral health is good or poor due to a lapse in dental care, or sign of a more serious health problem.

For more details about TDP benefits, go to [www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com). ★



**Forty percent of adults over age 30** have some level of gum disease. Seventy percent of adults over age 65 have gum disease.

Source:  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Bad Breath Is No Fun for Anyone

When you lean forward for a conversation, do your friends and associates lean back? If so, you might have chronic bad breath, also called halitosis.

Mouthwash can only do so much (and mints don't help). But with some simple lifestyle and oral care changes, bad breath will be conquered. Proper—and consistent—oral hygiene is usually all it takes to keep mouth odors away.

### First, the Causes

Bacteria in the mouth are the usual suspects for smelly breath, especially on the tongue and gums. While garlic, coffee, onions, sugary foods and some medicines typically cause mouth odors, other factors include:

- **Poor dental habits:** Poor brushing techniques and a lack of flossing allow food particles to decay in your mouth and cause odors.
- **Periodontal (gum) disease:** Gum disease is caused by a buildup of plaque and decay in the teeth. Bad breath is a warning sign.
- **Dry mouth:** Medications, salivary gland problems, breathing from the mouth or even dieting can cause dry mouth and trigger bad breath.
- **Tobacco:** Cigarettes, cigars and chewing tobacco cause bad breath by reducing saliva flow and leaving smelly residue in the mouth.

### Mints Aren't the Solution You Imagined

Ever wonder why your breath still smells even after you've popped a mint? It's because a key ingredient in many breath "cures" (like mints) is sugar. Smelly mouth bacteria feed on sugar to quickly reproduce, which makes your halitosis even worse.

**Tip:** Chew sugar-free gum or drink plenty of water to keep saliva flowing in your mouth.

### How to Vanquish Bad Breath

You can win the battle against bad breath. Proper oral hygiene or treatment of periodontal disease can help cure bad breath almost immediately. Here's what to do:

- **Brush your teeth** for two minutes twice a day, limit snacking, drink water throughout the day and use a soft-bristled brush.
- **Floss to remove dental plaque** from places that your toothbrush can't reach. Food debris left between your teeth can cause bad breath and lead to gum disease.
- **Avoid sweets** and other empty-calorie snacks that can result in tooth decay. Bacteria and sugar produce acids that attack the teeth. ★



## 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](http://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. ★

## Addressing Quality of Care Concerns

United Concordia and its network dentists are committed to delivering the highest quality of care and service to TDP members.

If you have a question about **the quality of treatment** you receive, you should first discuss it with your dentist to allow the provider an opportunity to resolve any issues.

If you still have concerns after speaking with your dentist, you can submit a formal inquiry, or "grievance," to United Concordia. Grievances must be submitted in writing and can be sent using our online form. (Find it under the Forms & Materials tab at [www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com).) Be sure to include your name, sponsor's identification number, provider's name and address, and a detailed description of your concern.

Examples of issues that can be reviewed through the grievance process include those related to:

- Poor or unnecessary treatment
- Safety/health issues
- The professionalism of the dentist or office staff.

Questions related to **the processing of your claim or the amount you owe the dental office** should be directed to TDP Customer Service, 844-653-4061, or for OCONUS, 844-653-4060.

United Concordia will work with you and the dentist to fully investigate your concern, resolve it appropriately and notify you on completion of the review. ★

## What's a DS Logon?

A DS Logon is a secure, self-service logon credential created by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) allowing beneficiaries affiliated with the Department of Defense access to several websites, including TDP, using a single username and password.

If you're having trouble getting into your TDP account, it may be that you have yet to upgrade your **Basic (Level 1) Logon Account** to a **Premium (Level 2) Account**.

If that's the case:

- Go to **www.uccitdp.com** and select the red My Account button on the upper right of the web page.
- On the DS Logon page, select More DS Logon Options.
- Now select Upgrade My DS Logon and follow the directions.

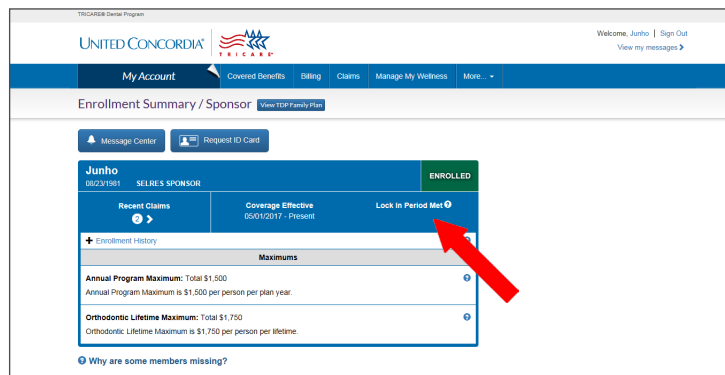
## Support

Still having trouble getting in? Contact the DMDC Support Center at **1-800-477-8227**. Support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. ★

## A Guide to My Account's Tools and Timesavers

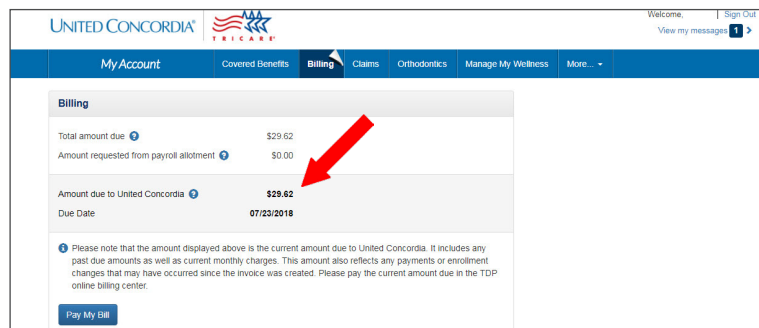
The *My Account* online dental feature provides you fast access to TDP claims information, your dental and enrollment history and many other helpful features.

First, find the *My Account* button online at **www.uccitdp.com**. Select it. Log in using your **DS Logon**, which will take you to the enrollment summary page. (Having trouble logging in? See the sidebar at left.) Are you a National Guard or Reserve member with a sponsor and family account? Select your plan or your family's plan to view the account.



This page shows if you are enrolled, your claims and coverage dates, whether you've met your lock-in period, your maximum allowances and a link to your **Enrollment History**.

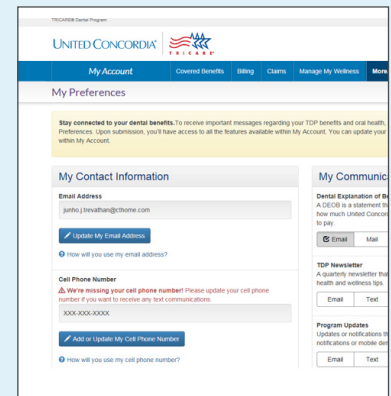
You can view your covered benefits by selecting the tab in the blue ribbon of links along the top. A benefits page opens with a drop-down menu on the left. It displays a searchable database of your benefits by category or procedure code. To see your current bill, return to the blue ribbon along the top and select **Billing**.



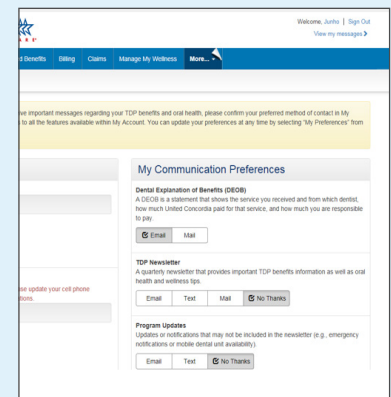
The **Billing** page opens and displays your premium due to United Concordia, including any amounts that may be deducted from your payroll allotment. Select the blue **Pay My Bill** button to do just that. You also can view your invoice history and set your billing preferences. To view your claims, select **Claims** at the top. (Continued on page 5)

## Setting Your Preferences

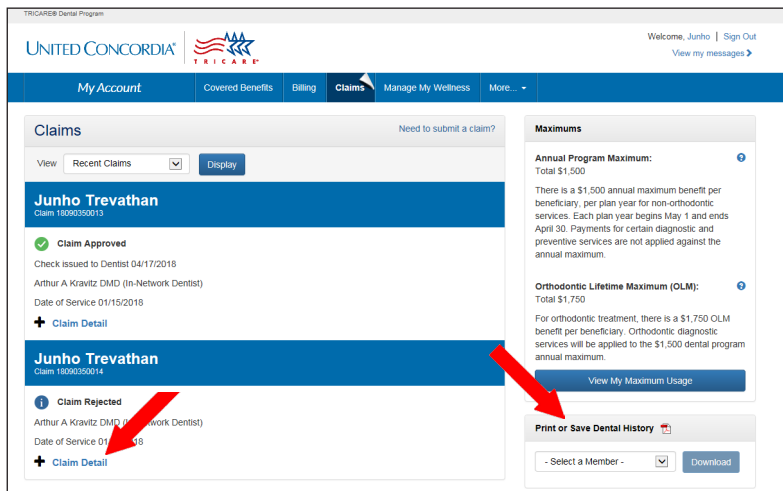
You can find your **Preferences** page within *My Account* by selecting the **More** link, on the upper right of the blue navigational bar. You can change your preferences whenever you like.



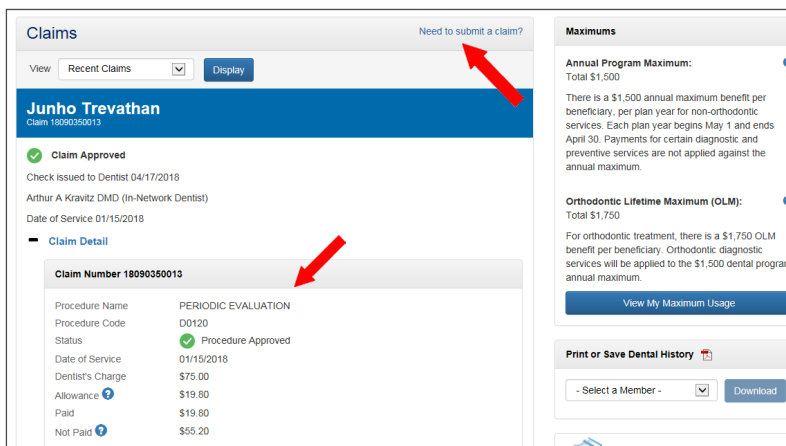
Update your contact information on the left side of the **Preferences** window.



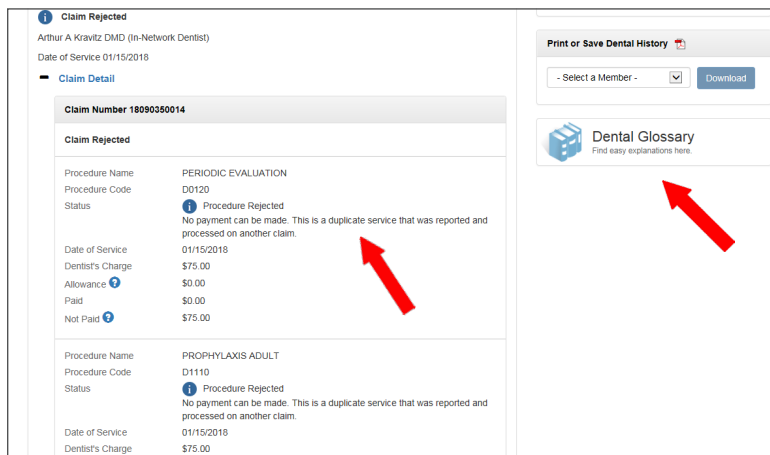
On the right, choose how you would like to receive your Dental Explanation of Benefits (DEOB), TDP updates, oral health messages, schedule reminders or this newsletter. ★



From this page you can print or save your **Dental History** or review your **Claim Detail**.



The detail shows the day of service, the procedure, claim status, dentist's charge, what was paid and your cost-share. You also can submit a claim on behalf of your provider.



If the claim was rejected, the **Claim Detail** will display the reason why and the amount that's due for the dental care you received. Need help understanding a term? Check the **Glossary**. (Continued on page 6)

## Chronic Conditions and the TDP Wellness Program

Because the health of the mouth can directly affect overall health, it's important to keep the mouth, teeth and gums as healthy as possible.

Individuals with chronic medical conditions can get additional dental benefits, at no cost, through the TDP Wellness Program. TDP members qualify for the program if they have any of these medical conditions:

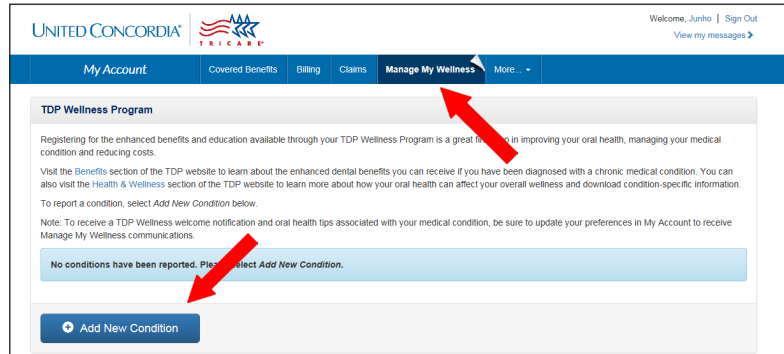
- Cerebral Vascular Disease (stroke)
- Coronary Artery Disease (heart)
- Diabetes
- Lupus
- Oral Cancer
- Organ Transplant
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Pregnancy

To receive enhanced coverage, you or anyone on your dental plan must report the condition or pregnancy via the *My Account* application at [www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com).

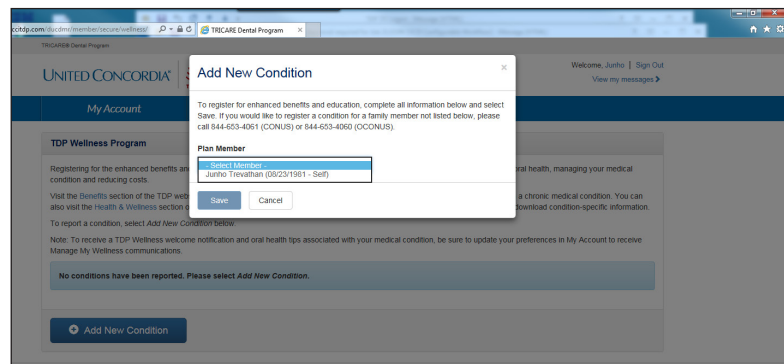
Take advantage of these wellness benefits. You might not need the extra services, but your dentist can recommend which (if any) additional covered procedures can help the condition of your mouth. ★

(Continued from page 5)

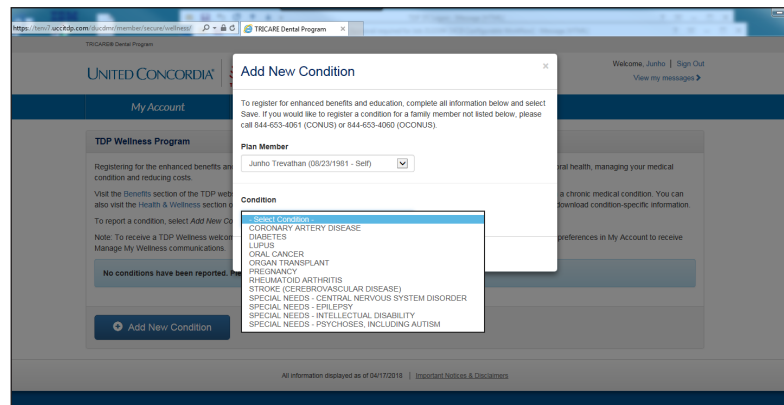
You can register with a medical condition by selecting **Manage My Wellness** in the blue ribbon at the top.



If you are pregnant or have a chronic condition covered by the TDP Wellness Program, you qualify for additional benefits. Those include an additional periodontal maintenance per year, scaling and root planing and, in some cases, four periodontal surgical procedures. Members with special needs can also register for nitrous oxide sedation.



Select **Add New Condition** and first identify the member who is reporting the condition. Select **Save**.



Select the condition: Cerebral Vascular, Disease (stroke), Coronary Artery Disease (heart), Diabetes, Lupus, Oral Cancer, Organ Transplant, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Pregnancy or Special Needs and **Save**. Your condition status will show as **ACTIVE** to confirm your activation. You're all set for your additional dental benefits. ★



## Prediabetes and Diabetes

Prediabetes is an under-recognized health issue that has dental implications. About 84 million people in the U.S. over age 20 have prediabetes, and 90 percent don't know they have it, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Treating it in its early stages can prevent more serious health problems down the road. These can range from type 2 diabetes to problems with your heart, blood vessels, eyes and kidneys.

### One thing leads to another

Think of prediabetes and diabetes as dominos that fall into other dominos. Too much sugar in the blood over long periods of time can cause inflammation that can affect many body systems, including your mouth.

People with poorly controlled diabetes are more likely to lose some of their bodies' ability to fight infection and develop oral health complications, like gum disease. Gum disease, in turn, can contribute to the progression of diabetes.

### Signs to watch for

Ask your doctor if you should be tested for prediabetes if you:

- Are overweight
- Are 45 years of age or older
- Have a parent, brother, or sister with type 2 diabetes
- Are physically active less than three times a week
- Have had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy) or gave birth to a baby who weighed more than nine pounds
- Have polycystic ovary syndrome.

African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, American Indians, Pacific Islanders and some Asian Americans are at higher risk for prediabetes. Your doctor will schedule a blood test for you to find out if you have the disease, recommend any next steps based on your exam and individual needs. ★

## Best Practices for Oral Health

Brush your teeth for two minutes twice a day with a soft-bristled brush. The size and shape of your brush should fit your mouth, allowing you to reach all areas easily. More tips:

- Replace your toothbrush every three months or sooner if the bristles are frayed. A worn toothbrush won't do a good job of cleaning your teeth.
- Make sure to use a fluoride toothpaste accepted by the American Dental Association.

Brushing your teeth is only a part of complete oral health. You should also:

- Clean between teeth daily once a day. Tooth decay-causing bacteria still linger between teeth where toothbrush bristles can't reach. Flossing helps remove plaque and food particles from between the teeth and under the gum line.
- Eat a balanced diet that limits sugary beverages and snacks.
- Stop smoking.

See your dentist regularly for prevention and treatment of oral disease. The TDP covers two exams and cleanings in a consecutive 12-month period. For details about your coverage, go to [www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com). ★



# HEALTH MATTERS

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## CHECK THIS OUT...

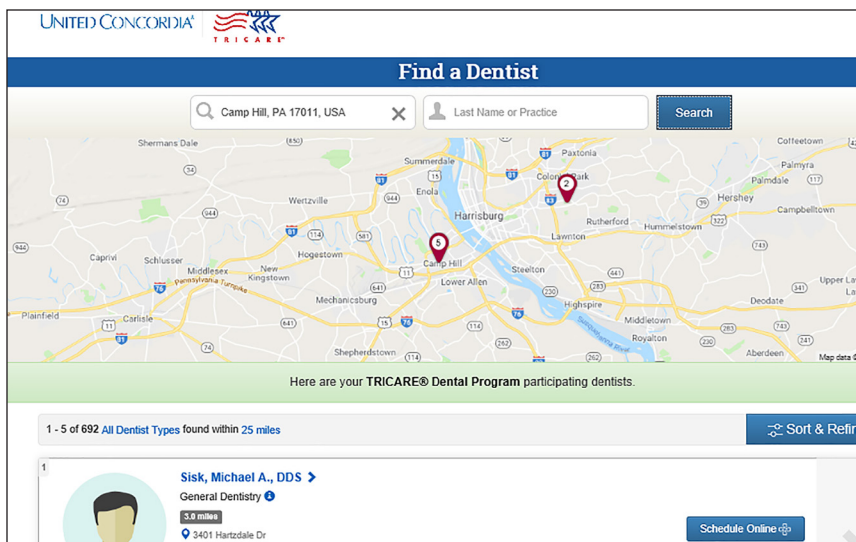
### A Visual Guide to My Account

See your TRICARE Dental Program claims, a cost estimator and procedure history with the online *My Account* application at [www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com). This guide shows you how to use it.

See pages 4-6.

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## Find a Dentist tool is updated



Screenshot

The online *Find a Dentist* application, found at [www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com), has been improved to show a map of network dentists working near you, their contact information, online-scheduling options where available, and whether the providers treat members who have special needs.

## TRICARE DENTAL PROGRAM RESOURCES

[www.uccitdp.com](http://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

[www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/bwe](http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/bwe)