



## Smile:

*A healthy mouth creates more  
.....  
than just a beautiful smile  
.....*

## How can a healthier mouth make for a healthier body?



A healthy mouth can create a beautiful, healthy smile. But, did you know that a healthy mouth can also create a healthier body? In years past, a trip to the dentist simply ensured a bright, shiny, cavity-free smile. Today, researchers continue to find evidence that suggests good oral health can positively impact many medical conditions<sup>1</sup>. This means that regular dental checkups can improve whole body health.

## The mouth and body connection

- Over 120 diseases can show early signs or symptoms in the mouth.<sup>2</sup>
- Acute or chronic periodontal (gum) disease appears to negatively affect the body's overall health.<sup>1</sup>
- A mouth that has been treated and is free of gum disease may promote an overall healthier body.<sup>1</sup>

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## Delta Dental offers *Healthy Smile, Healthy You*

- Addressing four important health issues:
  - Diabetes
  - Pregnancy
  - Certain High Risk Cardiac Conditions
  - Cancer Treatment
- If you have one of the above health conditions, *Healthy Smile, Healthy You*<sup>®</sup> provides additional assistance in keeping your mouth (and you) healthy.
- *Healthy Smile, Healthy You* allows for an additional cleaning and exam\* beyond your plan's ordinary limit per benefit period.
- In addition to an extra cleaning and exam, *Healthy Smile, Healthy You* provides cancer patients undergoing radiation or chemotherapy with an additional fluoride application beyond the age limitation of the group contract.
- Remember, it is still important to brush your teeth twice a day and floss once a day.

\*You may be eligible for an additional periodontal maintenance procedure if you have a history of definitive periodontal treatment, such as surgery.



## **Keep your diabetes in check**

A healthy mouth can help keep diabetes in check. Increased sugar levels have a negative impact on oral health by increasing the severity of existing gum disease and may lead to tooth loss. In addition, diabetics who have gum disease find it far more difficult to control their sugar levels than diabetics who do not have gum problems, because the infections can cause increased blood sugar levels<sup>1</sup>.

## **Healthy Smile, Healthy You = healthier baby!**

According to the American Academy of Periodontology, pregnant women with gum disease may be much more likely to have a baby that's born too early or too small than pregnant women without gum disease<sup>3</sup>. Research indicates that a labor-inducing biological fluid is found in oral bacteria. This fluid increases with gum disease and may increase the risk of pre-term, low birth weight babies<sup>4</sup>.

*Don't underestimate the importance of regular dental checkups, especially for diabetics, pregnant women, those with heart conditions and cancer patients receiving radiation and/or chemotherapy treatments.*

*For more details on  
Healthy Smile, Healthy You  
ask your Benefits representative  
or refer to your member handbook.*

### **Help keep your heart healthier**

Gum disease and cardiovascular disease are major public health issues that impact a large number of Americans every day. Individuals with certain heart conditions have an increased risk of oral bacteria infecting their hearts. These infections, called infective endocarditis, occur when bacteria from the mouth enter the bloodstream through small injuries that occur most often during normal brushing, flossing or eating<sup>5</sup>.

### **Reduce side effects of cancer treatment**

Cancer treatment delivered through radiation and/or chemotherapy can lead to many debilitating oral conditions. Both treatments can have direct effects on salivary glands and oral tissues resulting in increased risk for oral pain, infections and cavities. Research has shown that many of these side effects can be avoided or greatly reduced with diligent oral care and participation by a dental team in the overall cancer treatment<sup>6</sup>.



# Get started improving your oral health today!

It's easy to enroll in *Healthy Smile, Healthy You*.

If your employer offers the program, ask your Benefits representative for an enrollment form, or print one from our website at [deltadentalva.com](http://deltadentalva.com).

Complete and return the form to Delta Dental with your doctor's signature. Then you can talk to your dentist about scheduling an appointment.



## *The Benefits of Experience*

Delta Dental of Virginia  
800.237.6060  
[deltadentalva.com](http://deltadentalva.com)

<sup>1</sup> "How Gum Disease Affects Your Health"; Delta Dental Plans Association, [oralhealth.deltadental.com/Adult/OralConditions/22,DD106](http://oralhealth.deltadental.com/Adult/OralConditions/22,DD106), Accessed 8/2011.

<sup>2</sup> Steven L. Bricker, Robert P. Langlais, and Craig S. Miller, *Oral Diagnosis, Oral Medicine and Treatment Planning* (Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> "Baby Steps to Healthy Pregnancy and On-Time Delivery", *American Academy of Periodontology*, [perio.org/consumer/pregnancy.htm](http://perio.org/consumer/pregnancy.htm), Accessed 8/2011.

<sup>4</sup> "Detection of Porphyromonas gingivalis in the Amniotic Fluid in Pregnant Women With a Diagnosis of Threatened Premature Labor," *Journal of Periodontology Online*, <http://www.joponline.org/doi/abs/10.1902/jop.2007.060368>, Accessed 8/2011

<sup>5</sup> *Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institutes of Health, 2000.

<sup>6</sup> "Oral Complications of Cancer Treatment: What the Dental Team Can Do", National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institutes of Health, [www.nidcr.nih.gov/OralHealth/Topics/CancerTreatment/OralComplicationsCancerOral.htm](http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/OralHealth/Topics/CancerTreatment/OralComplicationsCancerOral.htm), Accessed 8/2011.