



DENTAL HEALTH

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Recommendations from American Dental Assoc.

- Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste for at least two minutes
- Replace your toothbrush every 3-4 months, or sooner if the bristles are frayed
- Use floss daily; preferably at night
- Eat a balanced diet and limit between meal snacks
- Visit your dentist regularly for professional cleanings and oral exams

Dental/Vision Benefits

- Dental/Vision benefits are provided for active employees and their eligible dependents only
- Maximum Benefit Payable - \$750 per family unit per Calendar Year
- Expenses in excess of the maximum can be paid from the Supplemental Credit Reserve Account
- Check your NWO Plumbers & Pipefitters Health and Welfare Plan for other plan benefits or restrictions



PREVENTIVE ORAL CARE

Every family should have a local dentist for their bi-annual visits to ensure that everyone's teeth and gums are as healthy and clean as they should be. Catching problems early gives your dentist more options for exploring different treatments for teeth and gum problems.

Dental disease is not an obscure and mysterious ailment. You don't inherit dental disease. It is not only a disease of the mouth, but also a disease of the body.

When you go to your dentist they are not only looking for signs of tooth decay and gum disease, but other conditions such as precancerous or cancerous lesions, diabetes, and blocked salivary glands.

The two most common oral diseases—tooth decay and periodontal disease—originate in plaque, the sticky bacteria-laden film that collects on your teeth between brushing.

Tooth decay starts when bacteria produce acid that destroys the surface of the teeth. The decay process is gradual. When decay advances to the point where a hole forms in the enamel, this is called a cavity. Brushing your teeth helps to remove plaque; however, even the best brushing doesn't remove all of it. It takes decay about 6 months from the moment it starts to penetrate the enamel before it can be detected by the dentist. This is why it is important to see your dentist on a regular basis twice a year so they can remove the tartar and



plaque you may have missed.

Cavities are still the most prevalent chronic disease of childhood. A child's first visit should be before all the primary teeth have appeared or by age 2.

Dentist can provide guidance to children and parents, deliver preventive oral health services, and diagnose and treat dental disease in its earliest stages. This ongoing dental care will help both children and adults maintain optimal oral health throughout their lifetimes.

HEART ATTACK AND GUM DISEASE

How well you care for your teeth may predict your risk of heart attack. Research has shown that certain bacteria in the mouth from poor dental hygiene can produce clumping of blood platelets, a cause of blood clots, which lead to heart attack and/or

stroke.

A study has shown that people with serious gum disease have a 25% increased risk of coronary heart disease compared to those with no gum disease.

Gum disease can also dra-

matically reduce the effectiveness of the immune system and actually shorten life expectancy. Dental disease is a serious health problem and if you ever want to be truly healthy, you must restore your oral health. Prevention is the key to continued oral health.