



# Delta Dental of Illinois' Enhanced Benefits Program

Oral health meets overall health.

Your group's dental plan includes enhanced benefits that take advantage of the emerging science of evidence-based dentistry.

Those eligible for Delta Dental of Illinois' Enhanced Benefits Program include:

- People with periodontal (gum) disease.
- People with diabetes.
- Pregnant women.
- People with high-risk cardiac conditions.
- People with kidney failure or who are undergoing dialysis.
- People undergoing cancer-related chemotherapy and/or radiation.
- People with suppressed immune systems due to HIV positive status, organ transplant, and/or stem cell (bone marrow) transplant.
- People with special needs.

Delta Dental of Illinois' Enhanced Benefits Program integrates medical and dental care – where oral health meets overall health. This program customizes benefits at the individual level by offering additional services to people who have specific health conditions (as listed above) that can be positively affected by additional care. The program also includes benefits to aid in the fight against oral cancer (these benefits are automatically included).

If you have one or more of the medical conditions covered under Delta Dental of Illinois' Enhanced Benefits Program, you must enroll to become eligible for the additional benefits. You can enroll yourself and/or your dependents, or your dentist can enroll you. Once you are enrolled, you are immediately eligible for the enhanced benefits.

Delta Dental of Illinois' Enhanced Benefits Program provides special benefits to the following groups:

## Benefits for People with Periodontal (Gum) Disease

For enrollees with a history of susceptibility to periodontal diseases or periodontal surgery, periodontal maintenance needs to be conducted at more frequent intervals than the traditional two cleanings per year. The additional cleanings are not only more economical than periodontal surgery, but they also help maintain overall health and reduce tooth loss compared to those periodontal patients who do not receive these therapies. Enrollees with periodontal disease are eligible for four teeth cleanings, either prophylaxis (general cleaning) or periodontal maintenance, in a benefit year.\* Additionally, the enrollee is eligible for fluoride applications; frequency is determined by group contract.

## Benefits for People with Diabetes

Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States, and it has a total economic cost in medical expenditures and lost productivity estimated at \$132 billion per year. The relationship between diabetes and oral health, specifically periodontal disease, is recognized in the medical and dental communities. Research has confirmed that diabetes worsens with periodontal disease, and it strongly suggests that severe periodontal disease increases the severity of diabetes. Glycemic control has proven to be one of the best ways to prevent complications of diabetes. A number of studies strongly indicate that when diabetics receive more professional teeth cleanings, their blood glucose levels are much better controlled. Enrollees with diabetes are eligible for four teeth cleanings, either prophylaxis (general cleaning) or periodontal maintenance, in a benefit year.\*

## Benefits for Pregnant Women

Scientific evidence indicates that women with periodontal disease are up to 7.5 times more likely to give birth to premature babies. According to the National Institutes of Health, as many as 19% of the 250,000 premature, low birthweight infants born in the United States each year may be attributed to infectious oral disease. Clinical studies of pregnant women with periodontal disease strongly suggest that more frequent professional teeth cleanings will benefit the health of both the baby and the mother. Pregnant enrollees are eligible for one additional prophylaxis (general cleaning) or periodontal maintenance visit during the time of the pregnancy.\*

## Benefits for People with High-Risk Cardiac Conditions

A recent guideline release by the American Heart Association indicates that an individual's overall oral health may be an important factor in avoiding infective endocarditis. Infective endocarditis occurs when bacteria, often from the mouth, enters the bloodstream and attacks the lining of the heart. The benefit was developed to help at-risk individuals better maintain their oral health to reduce bacteria levels in the mouth in an effort to lower their risk for infective endocarditis. People with high-risk cardiac conditions are eligible for four teeth cleanings, either prophylaxis (general cleaning) or periodontal maintenance, in a benefit year.\* Conditions include a history of infective endocarditis; certain congenital heart defects such as having one ventricle instead of the normal two; individuals with artificial heart valves; heart valve defects caused by acquired conditions like rheumatic heart disease; hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, which causes abnormal thickening of the heart muscle; individuals with pulmonary shunts or conduits; mitral valve prolapse with regurgitation (blood leakage).

## Benefits for People with Kidney Failure or who are Undergoing Dialysis

According to the National Kidney Foundation, one out of nine Americans has chronic kidney disease. Dental infections increase the risk of systemic infection in people with kidney disease, and systemic infection increases the risk of serious side effects. These individuals may benefit from having their teeth cleaned professionally at more frequent intervals to reduce the build up of bacteria in the mouth. This can help lower the risk of bacteria that will enter the bloodstream, create infection and further compromise their health. People with kidney failure or who are undergoing dialysis are eligible for four teeth cleanings, either prophylaxis (general cleaning) or periodontal maintenance, in a benefit year.\*

## Benefits for People Undergoing Cancer-Related Chemotherapy and/or Radiation

People undergoing cancer-related chemotherapy and/or radiation are at increased risk for infection because their immune system response has been weakened due to their serious health condition. Head and neck radiation cause some specific oral health problems. According to the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR), prevention of problems in the mouth is critical to obtaining the maximum benefit from cancer treatment, and people are encouraged to see a dentist before beginning treatment. Because a common side effect of head and neck radiation is an increase in cavities, the NIDCR recommends fluoride treatment and the use of prescription-strength fluoride toothpaste for those undergoing this treatment. Prescription-strength fluoride toothpaste and mouth rinses are often covered by medical/prescription drug benefit plans. Enrollees who are undergoing cancer-related chemotherapy and/or radiation are eligible for four teeth cleanings, either prophylaxis (general cleaning) or periodontal maintenance, in a benefit year.\* Additionally, the enrollee is eligible for fluoride applications; frequency is determined by their group contract.

## Benefits for People with Suppressed Immune Systems due to HIV Positive Status, Organ Transplant, and/or Stem Cell (Bone Marrow) Transplant

It is well established scientifically that people with serious health conditions like HIV positive status and organ failure are at increased risk for infection generally because of their weakened immune system. These individuals may benefit from having their teeth cleaned professionally at more frequent intervals to reduce the build up of bacteria in the mouth. This can help lower the risk of bacteria that will enter the bloodstream, create infection and further compromise their health. Enrollees who have suppressed immune systems due to HIV positive status, organ transplant, and/or stem cell (bone marrow) transplant are eligible for four teeth cleanings, either prophylaxis (general cleaning) or periodontal maintenance, in a benefit year.\*

Additionally, the enrollee is eligible for fluoride applications; frequency is determined by their group contract.

## Benefits for People with Special Needs

Individuals with special needs are those with physical, medical, developmental and/or cognitive needs, including those with autism, alzheimer's disease, down syndrome, spinal cord injuries and other conditions where modifications are necessary to provide the best oral health treatment possible. Individuals with special needs might require enhanced dental care, as at home oral health care may be difficult for people with special needs and/or their caregivers. Providing additional preventive care for individuals with special needs can help resolve untreated cavities, periodontal diseases and more. Enrollees with special needs are eligible for four cleanings, either prophylaxis (general cleaning) or a periodontal maintenance, in a benefit year. Additionally, the enrollees are eligible for fluoride applications; frequency is determined by their group contract.

\*Coverage will be at the group-contracted benefit level, with the additional frequency allowance being the only change. There is no end date on this additional coverage, no age requirement and the patient may be the subscriber, spouse or other covered dependent. Check your plan description to see if you have this coverage.