

In Touch

*with the TRICARE Retiree
Dental Program*



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2009 begins with steady stream of new TRDP enrollments here and abroad

The introduction of the new TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) contract last October 1 has generated a steady flow of new enrollments in the Enhanced and Enhanced-Overseas TRDP that is expected to continue in 2009.

Additions to this government-authorized dental program for Uniformed Services retirees and their families include the coverage of dental implant services and posterior white resin fillings to an already comprehensive scope of benefits and the availability of worldwide TRDP coverage under the new Enhanced-Overseas Program. These program enhancements have helped push TRDP enrollment to well over 1.1 million covered lives.

As the TRDP continues its efforts to reach out to more than 2.3 million retirees who are eligible to enroll in this valuable dental benefits program, the rate of new enrollments is expected to increase throughout the year.

A New Year's resolution: Take control of your dental health this year

Prevention and early diagnosis are keys to attaining and maintaining good dental health. Your dental health is in your hands and under your control.

There are several things you can do to take control of your dental health:

- Brush thoroughly twice a day for two minutes each time. Two minutes may seem like a long time to brush, but it actually takes that long to break up the bacterial film (plaque) that forms on your teeth and thoroughly clean each area of your mouth. By breaking up the plaque, you prevent the bacteria from causing tooth destruction. Electric toothbrushes often have built-in timers, but with a manual toothbrush you can use an egg timer to ensure you are spending the full two minutes. When brushing, use an American Dental Association-approved toothpaste containing fluoride.

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- Floss thoroughly once a day for two minutes. Flossing breaks up the plaque that forms on the surfaces between the teeth. This is particularly important in helping to prevent periodontal (gum) disease.
- See your dentist twice a year. Only a dental professional can detect dental disease in its early stages and provide the preventive procedures essential to helping prevent dental disease. It is much better to stop dental disease early rather than wait until it is in its advanced stages. A small filling now can often prevent the need for a root canal and a crown later. Your dental hygienist can also help point out areas that you may not be cleaning thoroughly enough when you brush and floss.
- Use your TRDP benefits to obtain your annual examinations and preventive services as well as any treatment that may be found necessary as the result of early diagnosis. This will save you discomfort and money in the future and help ensure you have good dental health—a large part of your overall health

The first of the year is also a good time to log on to the Consumer Toolkit® at www.trdp.org to review your coverage levels, check the amount of deductible and maximums that are still available, and even help you determine when you should schedule your next cleaning. If you are a recent TRDP enrollee, the Toolkit can help you verify when your 12-month enrollment period will be satisfied so that you can schedule more extensive benefits like crowns, bridges, and even dental implants.

Now is the best time to take action on all those resolutions you made for the New Year, and one of the most important things you can do for yourself and your family is resolve to take care—and take control—of your dental health in 2009.

National Children’s Dental Health Month turns 60 in 2009

National Children’s Dental Health Month (NCDHM) celebrates its sixtieth birthday this year. As it has since 1949, the American Dental Association (ADA) will again sponsor National Children’s Dental Health Month in February to raise awareness about the importance of oral health. With the support of the ADA, NCDHM messages and useful materials have reached millions of people in communities across the country.

Developing good dental habits at an early age and scheduling regular dental visits help children get a good start on a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums. You can help your child learn good dental health practices by following these simple tips:

- Educate your child about visiting the dentist and maintaining good oral hygiene. Teaching your child about good dental health is easy with fun, educational tools such as online stories, games and more that are available just for kids at www.deltadentalca.org and www.ada.org.
- Making sure your child brushes his or her teeth twice a day, flosses daily and has regular dental checkups are all essential for establishing good oral hygiene at an early age.
- Be sure to use toothpaste that contains fluoride. When your child’s permanent back teeth erupt, talk to your child’s dentist about applying dental sealants to help prevent cavities from forming.
- If your child does develop cavities, take him or her to the dentist for an evaluation and possible fillings.

Important dates to remember

January:

- 1 — New Year’s Day
- 1 — Paul Revere’s birthday (1735)
- 1 — Betsy Ross’s birthday (1752)
- 15 — Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday (1929)
- 19 — Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (2009 observed)
- 17 — Benjamin Franklin’s birthday (1706)
- 26 — Chinese New Year 2009

February:

- 2 — Groundhog’s Day
- 11 — Thomas Edison’s birthday (1847)
- 12 — Abraham Lincoln’s birthday (1809)
- 14 — Valentine’s Day
- 16 — Presidents’ Day (2009 observed)
- 22 — George Washington’s birthday (1732)

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- Diet plays an important role in good dental health. Providing nutritional snacks and limiting the amount of sugary drinks your child consumes will help prevent plaque—the sticky film of bacteria that causes tooth decay—from forming on your child’s teeth.

Enrollment in the Enhanced TRICARE Retiree Dental Program provides your child with coverage for routine exams, cleanings, x-rays and fillings as well as fluoride treatments, sealants, orthodontics and even dental accident coverage.

Information provided in part by the American Dental Association.

Joke corner

A shy little four-year-old came in to the dentist for his first cleaning and checkup. The hygienist tried to strike up a conversation but got no response. After the cleaning, the dentist was called in to do the final check.

The dentist tried to strike up a conversation as well: “How old are you?” he asked. Still, the child did not respond.

The dentist then asked: “Don’t you know how old you are?” Immediately, four tiny fingers went up.

“Oh,” replied the dentist, “and do you know how old that is?” Four little fingers went up once again.

Continuing the effort to get a response, the dentist asked: “Can you talk?”

The solemn little patient looked at him and asked: “Yes! And can you count?”

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