

SmileNotes

An Oral Health Newsletter For Delta Dental Members

Fall 2009

Attention, Benefit Administrators: Please forward this newsletter to your employees, post it on your company intranet, or place it somewhere employees can easily read it.

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Fall SmileNote

Bottled water doesn't contain tooth-decay fighting fluoride, which is added to most municipal water supplies. For a healthy smile, drink tap water instead of bottled.

Good Oral Health Habits Begin at an Early Age

According to findings from a survey on American children's oral health conducted on behalf of Delta Dental Plans Association, most American children don't see their family dentist until they are well over 2 years old -- far later than is recommended by both dental and medical professionals.

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) recommends that a child go to the dentist by age one or within six months after the first tooth erupts.

"Baby" teeth are very important to development, as they:

- Help children chew properly to maintain good nutrition.
- Are involved in speech development.
- Help save space for permanent teeth.
- Promote a healthy smile that helps children feel good about the way they look.

The American Academy of Family Physicians recommends that care for a child's gums should begin at birth. Caregivers should gently wipe the baby's gums with a soft, wet cloth after each feeding. When primary teeth begin to appear, they should be cleaned with a soft, child-sized toothbrush and a pea-sized dab of children's toothpaste, twice a day.

More information about early childhood dental care can be found [here](#).



GIVE COLD AND FLU GERMS THE BRUSH-OFF.

As the leader in oral health, keeping people healthy is Delta Dental's number one priority. And with the cold and flu season upon us, everyone is concerned with doing everything they can to stay healthy.

Here are some easy ways to reduce your chances of catching a cold or the flu virus by following a few simple tips:

- Replace your toothbrush every two months, or every week while you are sick.
- Don't share a toothpaste tube with family members if you have a cold or the flu. Get a travel-size tube.
- Don't share toothbrushes. Store each toothbrush away from other toothbrushes to prevent the spread of bacteria.
- Disinfect your toothbrush regularly. Just put it in the silverware basket of the dishwasher with your next load of dishes to steam clean.
- Throw away your toothbrush after you've had a cold or the flu. Get a new one.
- Wash your hands before and after brushing.

For further information about oral health, definitions of dental terms, or links to additional dental resources, visit the [Your Oral Health](#) section at www.deltadentalma.com.