

# Dental Health

## Digest



Newsletter Exclusively for  
Dental Health Services Members

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Dental Health Services

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## Your Privacy Remains Our Top Priority

Your privacy is very important to Dental Health Services. We truly value our relationship with you, and we not only strive to earn your trust, but also to maintain it.

Enclosed is your Confidentiality of Information and Privacy Notice. Although this information has not changed since we shared it with you last year, we feel it's important enough to send again!

Dental Health Services respects the confidentiality of your Protected Health Information (PHI) and will never sell your information or dis-

close it to unaffiliated third parties. Furthermore, our strict company policy mandates that Dental Health Services employees may only access your information for the purpose of providing your dental benefits. Each employee-owner has been thoroughly trained in procedures to protect your privacy.

If you have any questions regarding your privacy or Dental Health Services, please contact your Member Service Specialist at 206-633-2300 or 800-248-8108, or visit our website at [www.dentalhealthservices.com](http://www.dentalhealthservices.com). We are always happy to help you! ●

# 6 Unusual Foods That Boost Your Oral Health

Quinoa. Xylitol. Stevia. What do these things have in common besides their uncommon names?

No, they're not newly-discovered oral diseases. They are actually natural foods that have been found to fight bacteria that cause cavities and gum disease.

But fret not; even though they sound bizarre, they are flavorful and can usually be found in grocery stores.

Ready to have a brighter, healthier smile? Try these six unusual foods to boost your oral health.

**Xylitol** - A naturally-occurring substance that looks and tastes like sugar, xylitol has been proven to be helpful in preventing tooth decay. It is commonly found in gum, mints, toothpaste & mouthwash.

**Shiitake mushrooms** - Native to East Asia, shiitake mushrooms contain a naturally occurring sugar called lentinan, which prevents oral bacteria from forming plaque.



**Wasabi** - Wasabi is a Japanese horseradish commonly used as a sushi condiment and has a strong, spicy flavor. It contains compounds called isothiocyanates, which inhibit the growth of bacteria that cause dental caries.



**Quinoa** (KEEN-wah) - Quinoa, a fluffy grain with a nutty flavor when cooked, is rich in calcium, magnesium, manganese and phosphorus.

These vitamins strengthen tooth structure and prevent decay and caries formation.



**Kale** - Kale is a form of cabbage loaded with Vitamins C and K, which are great for your gums. It is also rich in other nutrients that support tooth structure.



**Stevia** - For thousands of years, this herbal shrub has been used as a natural sweetener in South America. Since stevia does not contain sugar, which contributes to tooth decay, it is a better alternative for those with a sweet tooth. Researchers from Purdue University have also found that stevia not only prevents tooth decay, it also helps fight it by preventing plaque from developing. ●

**Help is only a phone call or a click away!**

206-633-2300 or 800-248-8108  
[www.dentalhealthservices.com](http://www.dentalhealthservices.com)

# Diabetes and Your Oral Health

25.8 million Americans have diabetes. An additional 79 million are pre-diabetic.

Diabetes takes an enormous toll on people with complications ranging from heart disease and stroke to high blood pressure and blindness. For your mouth, there are risks associated with gum (periodontal) disease and tooth decay.

## What You Can Do

Make sure your dentist knows you have diabetes and establish a routine for check-ups, cleanings and your oral hygiene at home.

Watch for symptoms of gum disease including tender, swollen

gums and bleeding when brushing or flossing. Notify your dentist about anything out of the ordinary.

## Your At-Home Care Counts

You can help control how your diabetes affects your body and your mouth by keeping track of your blood sugar.

Flossing is an essential part to reduce the risk of periodontal disease by cleaning away plaque. You can use a mouth wash to further reduce your risk of tooth decay. ●

# Know and Understand Your Dental Coverage

In addition to the many covered procedures listed in your Schedule of Covered Services and Copayments, your dentist may choose to offer you alternate, upgraded, or additional treatment options.

These services are always optional, and you can decline them and select only those covered by your plan if you choose. Please be aware that if you opt for these noncovered procedures, you are responsible for paying the full fees your dentist normally charges.

By bringing your Schedule of Covered Services and Copayments with you to each dental visit, you will always be able to know what benefits are covered by your plan.

Feel free to ask your dentist questions and find out more information, but never sign anything you don't fully understand or agree to.

We're here to help you get the most out of your benefits. If you ever have questions about the services covered by your plan, contact your Member Service Specialist at 800-248-8108 or through our website at [www.dentalhealthservices.com](http://www.dentalhealthservices.com). ●

# The Busy Person's Quick Guide to a Healthy Mouth

We all know we should brush our teeth at least twice a day and floss at least once a day, but sometimes our busy schedules keep us from doing so. Here are a few tips that will help keep your pearly whites their healthiest!

- 1. Drink plenty of water.** A dehydrated mouth is more susceptible to bacterial growth, which can lead to cavities.
- 2. Quit smoking!** Smoking dehydrates your teeth. The enzymes in saliva help maintain

the balance of healthy bacteria.

- 3. Chew sugarless gum** if you don't have the option to brush after a meal.
- 4. Carry disposable floss.** Even if you can't brush or chew gum, flossing will help break up food caught between your teeth.
- 5. Reduce your sugar intake.** The bacteria in your mouth convert sugar to acid, which erodes tooth enamel. This enamel helps guard against cavities. ●

# Children's Checkups

Taking your child to the dentist regularly to maintain their dental health is just as important as brushing and flossing each and every day. Having your child visit the dentist is a great habit to develop - the earlier, the better. Regular dental visits from an early age (ideally at their first birthday or when their first tooth appears) makes your child get accustomed to the dental office environment, making it easier to return.

Most general dentists are able to treat the majority of children in their practice. A pedodontist, or pediatric dentist, is a dentist with additional formal training in treating children with complex restorative oral health needs.

## **What if my child has never had a cavity? Is it still necessary to visit the dentist each year?**

Regular dental visits will help your child maintain a cavity-free mouth and lifelong dental health. Professional teeth cleaning removes built-up debris, while fluoride treatments make teeth stronger and

more resistant to cavities. Regular visits also reinforce good brushing and flossing habits for your child. Ask your dentist to determine what your child's needs are, and how often visits should be scheduled.

## **What happens during a regular dental check-up?**

The dentist will review your child's medical and dental history and examine your child's teeth, oral tissue, and jaw. The teeth may be cleaned, polished, and given a fluoride treatment as necessary.

The important thing to remember is that you, as a parent, play a huge role in how your child views the dentist. Speak positively of visiting the dental office and this will influence your child's perspective on not only going to the dentist, but the importance of oral health in general. Practicing good dental hygiene early on will save your child from suffering from the effects of tooth decay down the road! ●





# Ways to Brighten Your Smile

A whiter smile can boost your self-confidence and lead to stronger dental health. Obtaining and maintaining a sparkling grin begins with the food and beverage choices you make everyday.

## Strawberry Power

Malic acid found in strawberries works as a natural bleach. In addition, the seeds and acid in strawberries act as a scrub.

## Citric Acid

Lemons, oranges and pineapples contain acids that work as brightening and lightening agents on tooth enamel. As an added bonus, these acids contain an enzyme that kills bad breath and stops tooth decay.

## Scrub While You Crunch

Eating crunchy foods like apples, celery, and carrots help naturally scrub teeth because of their abrasive nature. They are also a great stimulant in the production of saliva, which deters plaque formation.

## Foods To Avoid

Any type of food that you would eat with caution while wearing white will stain your teeth. Avoid foods like soy sauce, tobacco, red wines, coffee, tea, dark fruits and juices. Also, avoid soft drinks as they stain your teeth in two ways. The acids in soft drinks open the pores in teeth; then the dark coloring penetrates deeper causing the stain. While it is inevitable that you will eat or drink something with the po-

tential to stain your teeth, you can prevent it by rinsing your mouth thoroughly after your meal.

## In Between Brushing

Chewing on saliva-producing snacks and rinsing your mouth periodically between brushes will help stop stains from forming. Sugar free gum and even certain sugar free candies increase salivation production that acts as a cleaning agent in your mouth.

Rinsing your mouth after every meal when you can't brush will take away food particles and other cavity-causing bacteria lingering in your mouth.●

# Your Privacy & Confidentiality Notice

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW YOUR MEDICAL AND DENTAL INFORMATION MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY. THIS NOTICE IS EFFECTIVE AUGUST 1, 2009.**

Dental Health Services is devoted to protecting your privacy and the confidentiality of your dental, medical, and personal health information that we may obtain or to which we have access. We do not sell our client information. Your personal information will not be disclosed to nonaffiliated third parties, unless permitted or required by law, or authorized in writing by you.

Throughout this Notice, unless otherwise stated, your medical and dental health information refers to only health information created or received by Dental Health Services and identified in this Notice as Protected Health Information (PHI). Please note that your dentist maintains your dental records, including payments and charges. Dental Health Services will have a record of this portion of your PHI only in special or exceptional circumstances.

Dental Health Services' privacy policies describe who has access to your PHI within the organization, how it will be used, when your PHI may be disclosed, safeguards to protect the privacy of your PHI and the training we provide our employees regarding maintaining and protecting your privacy.

## **Under what circumstances must Dental Health Services share my PHI?**

Dental Health Services is required to disclose your PHI to you, and to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) when it is conducting an investigation of compliance with legal requirements. Dental Health Services is also required to disclose your PHI, subject to certain requirements and limitations, if the disclosure is compelled by (any of the following):

- a court order;
- a board, commission or administrative agency pursuant to its lawful authority;
- a party to a proceeding pursuant to a subpoena, subpoena duces tecum, or other authorized discovery in a proceeding before a court or an administrative agency;
- an arbitrator or panel of arbitrators in a lawfully-requested arbitration;
- a search warrant;
- a coroner in the course of an investigation; or by other law.

## **When may Dental Health Services disclose my PHI without my authorization?**

Dental Health Services is permitted by law to use and disclose your PHI, without your authorization, for purposes of payment and health care administration.

- **Payment purposes** include activities to collect premiums and to determine or maintain coverage. These include using PHI in billing and collecting premiums, and related data processing including how your dentist obtains pre-authorization for certain dental

services. For example, Dental Health Services periodically conducts quality assurance inspections of your dentist's office and during such visits may review your dental records as part of this audit.

- **Health Care Administration** means basic activities essential to Dental Health Services' function as a Limited Health Care Service Contractor, and includes reviewing the qualifications and competence of your dentist; evaluating the quality of his/her services; providing subscriber services and information including answering enrollee inquiries but without disclosing PHI. Dental Health Services may, for example, review your dentist's records to determine if the copayments being charged by the office comply with the contract under which you receive dental coverage.
- In addition, Dental Health Services is permitted to use and disclose your PHI, without your authorization, in a variety of other situations, each subject to limitations imposed by law. These situations include, but are not limited to, the following uses and disclosures:
  - public health activities;
  - concerning victims of abuse, neglect or domestic violence;
  - health oversight agency;
  - judicial and administrative proceedings including the defense by Dental Health Services of a legal action or proceeding brought by you;
  - law enforcement purposes, subject to subpoena or law;
  - Workers' Compensation purposes;
  - parents or guardians of a minor; and
  - persons or entities who perform services on behalf of Dental Health Services and from whom Dental Health Services has received contractual assurances to protect the privacy of your PHI.

## **Is Dental Health Services ever required to get my permission before sharing my PHI?**

Uses and disclosures of PHI other than those required or permitted by law will be made by Dental Health Services only with your written authorization. You may revoke any authorization given to Dental Health Services at any time by written notice of revocation to Dental Health Services, except to the extent that Dental Health Services has relied on the authorization before receiving your written revocation. Uses and disclosures beyond those required or permitted by law, or authorized by you, are prohibited.

## **Does my employer have the right to access my PHI?**

If you are an enrollee under a plan sponsored by your employer, Dental Health Services will not disclose PHI to your employer except under the following conditions:

- you sign an authorization for release of your medical/dental information; or

- health care services were provided with specific prior written request and expense of the employer, and are relevant in a grievance, arbitration or lawsuit, or describe limitations entitling you to leave from work or limit work performance.

Any such disclosure is subject to Dental Health Services' "minimum necessary" disclosures policy.

### **What is Dental Health Services' "Minimum Necessary" Policy?**

Dental Health Services uses reasonable efforts to limit the use and disclosure of your PHI to the minimum necessary to accomplish the purpose of the use or disclosure. This restriction includes requests for PHI from another entity, and to requests made by Dental Health Services to other entities. This restriction does not apply to requests by:

- your dentist for treatment purposes;
- you; or
- disclosures covered by an authorization you provided to another entity.

### **What are my rights regarding the privacy of my PHI?**

Your rights respecting your PHI, and how you may exercise these rights are summarized here:

- You may request Dental Health Services to restrict uses and disclosures of your PHI in the performance of its payment or health care operations. However, a written request is required. Your health is the top priority and Dental Health Services is not required to agree to your requested restriction. If Dental Health Services agrees to your requested restriction, the restriction will not apply in situations involving emergency treatment by a health care provider.
- Dental Health Services will comply with your reasonable requests that you wish to receive communications of your PHI by alternative means or at alternative locations. Such requests must be made to Dental Health Services in writing.
- You have a right, subject to certain limitations, to inspect and copy your PHI. Your request must be made in writing. Dental Health Services will act on such request within 30 days of receipt of the request.
- You have the right to amend your PHI. The request to amend must be made in writing, and must contain the reason you wish to amend your PHI. Dental Health Services has the right to deny such requests under certain conditions provided by law. Dental Health Services will respond to your request within 60 days of receipt of the request and, in certain circumstances may extend this period for up to an additional 30 days.
- You have the right to receive an accounting of disclosures of your PHI made by Dental Health Services for up to 6 years preceding such request subject to certain exceptions provided by law. These exceptions include, but are not limited to:
  - disclosures made for payment or health care operations
  - disclosures occurring prior to February 26, 2003

Your request must be made in writing. Dental Health Services will provide the accounting within 60 days of your request but may extend

the period for up to an additional 30 days. The first accounting requested during any 12-month period will be made without charge. There is a \$25 charge for each additional accounting requested during such 12-month period. You may withdraw or modify any additional requests within 30 days of the initial request in order to avoid or reduce the fee.

You have the right to receive a copy of this Notice, and any amended Notice, upon written or telephone request made to Dental Health Services.

All written requests for the purposes described in this section, and all other written communications to Dental Health Services desired or required by this Notice, must be delivered to Dental Health Services, 936 N. 34th St., Suite 208, Seattle, WA 98103 by any of the following means:

- personal delivery;
- email delivery to [customercare@dentalhealthservices.com](mailto:customercare@dentalhealthservices.com);
- first class or certified U.S. Mail; or
- overnight or courier delivery, charges prepaid

### **What duties does Dental Health Services agree to perform?**

Dental Health Services will maintain the privacy of your PHI and provide you with notice of its legal duties and privacy practices with respect to PHI.

- Dental Health Services will abide by the terms of this Notice and any revised Notice, during the period that it is in effect.
- Dental Health Services reserves the right to change the terms of this Notice or any revised notice. Any new terms shall be effective for all PHI that it maintains including PHI created or received by Dental Health Services prior to the effective date of the new terms. Each time Dental Health Services makes a revised Notice, it shall 1) post it on its website, [www.dentalhealthservices.com](http://www.dentalhealthservices.com) and 2) distribute a written copy personally by First Class U.S. Mail to each of its subscribers who are enrolled with Dental Health Services during the period that such revised Notice remains effective.

### **What if I am dissatisfied with Dental Health Services' compliance with HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) privacy regulations?**

You have the right to express your dissatisfaction or objection to Dental Health Services and to the Secretary of HHS if you believe your privacy rights have been violated. Grievances to Dental Health Services must be made in writing to Dental Health Services, 936 N. 34th St., Suite 208, Seattle, WA 98103 Attn: Privacy Officer. Your written dissatisfaction must describe the acts or omissions you believe to be in violation of the provisions of this Notice or applicable laws. Your written objection to HHS or Dental Health Services must be filed within 180 days of when you knew or should have known of the act or omission. You will not be penalized or retaliated against for communicating your dissatisfaction. We are eager to assist you.

### **Who should I contact if I have any questions regarding my privacy rights with Dental Health Services?**

You may obtain further information regarding your PHI privacy rights by contacting your Dental Health Services Member Service Specialist at 800-637-6453 during regular office hours or through [www.dentalhealthservices.com](http://www.dentalhealthservices.com).



## Dental Health Services

936 N. 34th Street, Suite 208  
Seattle, WA 98103

*A Great Reason to Smile<sup>sm</sup>*

[www.dentalhealthservices.com](http://www.dentalhealthservices.com)

**Give someone you care about *A Great Reason to Smile<sup>sm</sup>* today!**

We've been providing excellent dental coverage for individuals, families and employers for more than 28 years. If you know anyone that could use a great dental plan, have them call us at 800-248-8108 or visit us online at [www.dentalhealthservices.com](http://www.dentalhealthservices.com) today!