

Benefits Spotlight

News for *You*. News to *Share* with your Employees.

Why Do I Need Dental Insurance?

It's not a surprising fact: People who have dental insurance are more likely to see a dentist.¹ Why is it so important that you see your dentist? In a word: prevention.

Delta Dental of Iowa's insurance plans vary, but all of them cover preventive services like the deep cleanings at your twice-yearly dental visits, X-rays, sealants (a thin coating over your teeth that protects against cavities) and fluoride treatments. These services are designed to prevent potential problems or catch them early. Whether it's gum disease, tooth decay or even oral cancer, the sooner your dentist identifies a dental disease or issue, the easier and less expensive it is to treat.

Moreover, some teeth and mouth problems can go unnoticed because they may not be painful. Take gum disease, for example. You can be in the early stages of gum disease and not even know it. But during a regular dental check-up, your dentist will quickly see it and help you reverse the damage.

It bears repeating: When you have dental insurance, you're more likely to keep your twice-yearly appointments. And when you visit your dentist on that regular schedule, you're likely to have better oral—and overall—health. Yes, research is increasingly showing that poor dental health is linked to poor health in other areas of your body.

According to the National Association of Dental Plans (NADP), people who do not have dental insurance are more likely to have extractions (when an entire tooth needs to be removed) and dentures. The NADP also reported that people without dental insurance face an increased risk of certain chronic conditions and are:

- 67% more likely to have heart disease
- 50 percent more likely to have osteoporosis
- 29 percent more likely to have diabetes

Has it been awhile since you've seen a dentist? That's OK, it's not too late to get a deep cleaning and your dental health back on track. The first two steps are finding the right dental insurance plan and dentist (Delta Dental of Iowa has the most in-network dentists in the state!).

Delta Dental of Iowa is here to help you find the right coverage for you and your budget. You can shop for a plan online, or you can call 877-958-7771 to speak to a Delta Dental of Iowa representative who can walk you through your options. You can also browse our list of dentists and select one near you.

SOURCES

National Association of Dental Plans: https://www.nadp.org/Dental_Benefits_Basics/Dental_BB_1.aspx#:~:text=Americans%20with%20dental%20benefits%20are,with%20and%20without%20Dental%20Benefits.
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Are Vegan Diets Harmful to Oral Health?

If you've taken a close look at the meat or dairy aisles in your local grocery store lately, you've probably noticed products you didn't see just a year or two ago. Gone are the days when cow's milk was all you could find lining dairy shelves, and the meat aisle is now brimming with a wide variety of plant-based substitutes. The demand is clear: People are turning to more plant-based diets, like vegetarianism and veganism, for animal welfare, environmental and health reasons.

While vegetarians shun only meat, vegans eliminate all animal products from their diets—and that includes dairy. In the U.S., anywhere from 1-2% of the total population identifies as vegan.¹

Dairy products contain several nutrients that are helpful to your oral health. When you eliminate dairy, it's important to consider how to replenish those nutrients through plant-based sources. According to the American Dietetic Association, nearly anyone can live a healthy life without meat, but giving up traditional animal-based sources of nutrients can increase the risk for gum disease.

Among the nutrients of greatest focus are calcium and vitamin D. Dairy products are among the most concentrated sources of calcium, a nutrient that keeps your bones, including your teeth, healthy and strong.

Dairy aside, vegans have many ways to get healthy amounts of calcium in their diets through broccoli, leafy greens and soybeans. Of course, taking a daily calcium supplement will help, too.

Vitamin D is typically found in fatty fish (like salmon), cheese and cow's milk—all of which are off the menu for vegans. Fortunately, vitamin D may be found in fortified plant-based cereals and beverages. Vitamin D supplements will also help boost the nutrient in the vegan diet. Plus, sunlight is a completely vegan source of vitamin D, too.

Veganism may be a healthy lifestyle choice for you, but when starting this or any major diet change, it's important to seek the advice of professionals to ensure it's the best move for you. Your doctor and dentist are great people to ask when considering veganism. Your doctor may also refer you to a dietitian, who can provide more detailed information on specific meal plans to help you gain the most benefit from a vegan diet.

Bottom line: Like any diet, balance and variety are keys to success when it comes to veganism. A well-balanced vegan diet rich in a variety of nutrients, including calcium and vitamin D, can help support your oral health.

SOURCES

<https://sentientmedia.org/how-many-vegans-are-there-in-the-u-s/>