



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Delta Dental of Illinois
111 Shuman Boulevard
Naperville, Illinois 60563

Contact:

Liz Jans
Meyocks
319-321-5695
lizjans@meyocks.com

Additional Media Contact:

Lyndsay Bradshaw
Delta Dental of Illinois
630-718-4753
lbradshaw@deltadentalil.com

September is Healthy Aging Month

Delta Dental of Illinois encourages older adults to make oral health a priority

NAPERVILLE, Ill. (September 6, 2017) – A new survey¹ from Delta Dental of Illinois finds that nearly half of Illinois adults worry about keeping their smile beautiful as they age. For Healthy Aging Month in September, Delta Dental of Illinois is encouraging adults to pay more attention to habits that can help maintain good oral health, resulting in a beautiful and healthy smile for many years to come.

"It's clear adults in Illinois value their smiles, and we want them to understand that good oral health is also important to overall health and quality of life as we age," said Dr. Sheila Strock, vice president, dental services and science officer at Delta Dental of Illinois. "Throughout our lives, our teeth work really hard. By making good oral health care habits and regular dental visits part of our routines, there's no reason we can't have healthy and beautiful smiles for a lifetime."

Yet, according to statistics from the Centers for Disease Control, almost 30 percent of those aged 65 and older have lost all of their teeth. Delta Dental of Illinois offers some tips that Illinois adults can use to keep their teeth and smile healthy.

- **Visit the dentist regularly.** Thirty-five percent of Illinois adults neglect to visit the dentist at least once a year. And nearly 20 percent reported they see the dentist one time in five years or less.¹ Besides providing preventive care and tips for oral health at every stage of life based on individual needs, dentists screen for oral cancer and can help identify other diseases and oral health issues before problems become more serious. Dentists will also discuss options for replacing teeth with dentures or implants, if necessary.

- **Brush twice a day.** More than one in three Illinois adults admits they typically brush their teeth just once a day or not at all.¹ Brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste is vital. Using a toothbrush with soft bristles can be gentler on gums. Also, an electric toothbrush might make brushing easier for someone who has lost dexterity.
- **Floss once a day.** Before or after brushing, it's important to floss to remove food particles stuck between teeth to help keep teeth and gums healthy. Older adults may find it easier to use a floss pick instead of traditional floss.
- **Drink plenty of water.** Older adults are more likely to have dry mouth, a condition that can lead to dental decay, but the effects can be lessened by drinking water or chewing sugarless gum.
- **Increase calcium intake.** It's important for older adults to get the right amount of calcium through diet or supplements. Calcium helps maintain good bone health and decreases the risk of tooth loss and gum disease. It's recommended that adults ages 51 and older get about 1,200 mg of calcium a day.²

"We only get one set of permanent teeth, so it's important that we take great care of them to ensure we keep them our whole lives," said Strock. "Losing teeth does not have to happen, but even those who may unfortunately lose some or all of their teeth need to be sure to take good care of their oral health."

For more tips on taking care of your oral health, visit Delta Dental of Illinois' oral health resource at YourOralHealthHub.com.

About Delta Dental of Illinois

Delta Dental of Illinois is a not-for-profit dental service corporation that provides dental benefit programs to individuals and more than 5,000 employee groups throughout Illinois. Delta Dental of Illinois covers 2 million individuals, employees and family members nationwide. Delta Dental of Illinois is based in Naperville, Illinois and offers single-site administration and client services.

###

¹Kelton, a leading global insights firm, conducted the 2017 Delta Dental of Illinois Adult Oral Health & Well-Being Survey. Interviews were conducted statewide via email with 316 Illinois residents 18+. For results based on the total sample of Illinois adults, the margin of error is +/- 5.5% at a 95 percent confidence level.

²<http://oralhealth.deltadental.com/22,21396>.