

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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New Year, New Smile

Delta Dental of Illinois Offers 10 Oral Health Resolutions for a Dazzling 2017

NAPERVILLE, Ill. (December 5, 2016) – Plan to get healthy this New Year? Gym shoes and low-calorie snacks aren't the only things you'll need – don't forget a toothbrush. Dental health is a key component of general wellness, and by taking care of your mouth, you'll improve your body's overall health.

"The new year is a great time to evaluate your oral health habits and make healthy changes," said Katina Spadoni, DDS, dental director for Delta Dental of Illinois. "Even seemingly small steps, such as committing to flossing every day or cutting down on sugar, can benefit your mouth's health for years to come."

So, to ensure a healthy and happy 2017, now is the perfect time to put oral health goals in place. Here are 10 resolutions from Delta Dental of Illinois to keep you smiling through the new year:

- 1. Brush and floss regularly:** The tried-and-true routine of brushing twice and flossing once a day is still the foundation for maintaining a healthy smile. Brush twice per day with a fluoride toothpaste for two minutes, paying special attention to the gum line and making sure to reach all surfaces of the teeth.
- 2. Schedule a dentist appointment:** Regular check-ups can help prevent any dental health problems before they cause discomfort or require more comprehensive or expensive treatment. Regular visits allow your dentist to monitor your oral health and recommend a dental health regimen to address specific areas of concern.
- 3. Replace your toothbrush:** A new toothbrush can remove more plaque than one that's worn out. Your toothbrush should be replaced every three to four months, as well as after you have been sick or if the bristles are frayed. Set reminders to check that your toothbrush is working its best to keep your mouth clean.
- 4. Add mouthwash to your oral health routine:** While mouthwash alone can't do the job of brushing and flossing, it can be the finishing touch on a well-rounded oral health routine. Look for an antimicrobial mouthwash with fluoride — these rinses reduce bacteria and inhibit bacterial growth that can cause gingivitis.

- 5. Kick that tobacco habit:** For those looking to quit smoking this new year, your mouth will reap the benefits. Smoking can contribute to gum disease, mouth pain, cavities and even tooth loss. After quitting, the risk of oral health problems decreases significantly.
- 6. Limit your sugar intake:** Cutting back on sugar can provide a multitude of health benefits, including a reduced risk of tooth decay. Reduce your consumption of sweet and sticky treats and refined carbohydrates, and replace them with healthier options. Swapping milk or water for soda or eating fruit instead of a sugary snack will keep you smiling.
- 7. Switch to sugarless gum:** This simple switch comes with two benefits: reducing your sugar intake, and preventing tooth decay. According to the American Dental Association, chewing sugarless gum following meals can neutralize and wash away acids produced by bacteria in the mouth.
- 8. Cut back on soda, coffee and alcohol:** Keep your pearly whites stain-free by limiting your intake of dark-colored liquids. Soda, coffee and alcohol have high levels of acidity, which can strip down and wear away tooth enamel, leading to tooth discoloration. Avoid potential erosion by switching to an alternative, like sugar-free seltzer water.
- 9. Take a multivitamin:** Calcium, copper, zinc, iodine, iron, potassium and vitamins B and D all contribute to your mouth's health. Making a multivitamin a part of your routine will help fill in any gaps in your diet with the proper vitamins, minerals and other nutritional elements.
- 10. Plan for dental care in the upcoming year:** According to a Delta Dental of Illinois survey, people with dental insurance are nearly twice as likely to visit the dentist as those without insurance. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that individuals with dental insurance are also far less likely to have unmet dental needs than those without insurance. If you are not covered, commit to a dental plan this year. Delta Dental of Illinois has program options for both individuals and families. Visit www.deltadentalil.me to view plan offerings.

"Taking good care of your mouth does more than ensure you have a healthy smile," says Dr. Spadoni. "Oral health and overall wellbeing go hand in hand. Make healthy oral habits a priority this new year, and your body will thank you."

For more suggestions on how to keep your mouth clean and healthy in 2017, visit 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.

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