

NEWS RELEASE

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Going to the Dentist Linked with Overall Well-Being

NAPERVILLE, Ill. (May 6, 2014) – Going to the dentist at least once a year contributes to feeling better about your life overall, according to Delta Dental’s Oral Health and Well-Being Survey¹ results announced today.

In fact, Americans who go to the dentist at least once a year are 22 percent more likely to report their overall well-being – their physical and emotional health – as good or better compared with those who seldom visit the dentist.

“Going to the dentist regularly is one part of taking care of ourselves,” says Dr. Katina Spadoni, dental director for Delta Dental of Illinois. “Taking care of ourselves is taking control of our well-being, and we feel better about our lives when we do.”

Not surprisingly, people who visit the dentist more often also tended to report better oral health. Individuals who visit the dentist at least once a year are 37 percent more likely to report their oral health as good or better versus those who infrequently find themselves in a dentist’s chair.

Dental Coverage Associated with Dentist Visits, Well-Being

Dental coverage is a significant factor in dental visits and overall well-being. Nearly eight of 10 Americans (78 percent) with dental coverage visit the dentist at least once a year versus only half (52 percent) who don’t have coverage. Illinois residents generally mirror the national results with 79 percent of those with coverage visiting the dentist regularly compared with 56 percent of those without coverage.

“The connection between dental coverage and dental visits perhaps isn’t surprising, but the numbers demonstrate the stark contrast in dental care,” Spadoni says. “At Delta Dental of Illinois, we strongly encourage those with coverage – and those without – to get the preventive care that is so vital for good oral health.”

In addition, Americans who have dental coverage are 14 percent more likely to say their overall well-being is good or better compared to those without dental coverage.

Reported Oral Health in Illinois is Generally Strong

Half of Illinois residents (51 percent) rate their overall health as very good or excellent, according to the Delta Dental of Illinois study. Despite the relatively strong oral health findings, several oral health challenges remain:

- More than one of five Illinois adults (23 percent) says they have unresolved oral health issues. The biggest reason for not addressing the problem is the ability to pay for the work (cited by 56 percent of those with unresolved issues), while 19 percent mentioned fear of the treatment.
- One of five Illinois adults (21 percent) says they have been advised by a dentist that they have gum disease.
- About one of six Illinois adults (17 percent) says they have missed work due to oral health issues beyond regular treatments and cleanings.

“Delta Dental of Illinois sponsored the Oral Health and Well-Being Survey to shine a spotlight on the importance of oral health,” says Spadoni. “As leaders in dental benefits, we know the importance of oral health for basic daily activities we take for granted, like smiling, talking and eating, and the important link between oral health and overall health. This study’s findings demonstrate the vital role that dental care plays in our overall well-being.”

About Delta Dental of Illinois

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

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¹*Morpace, Inc. conducted the Delta Dental Oral Health and Well-Being Survey on behalf of Delta Dental with 1,003 consumers across the United States. On behalf of Delta Dental of Illinois, Morpace, Inc. also conducted an oversample of 151 consumers in Illinois.*