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June is National Smile Month

Surveys show Illinoisans recognize the power of their smiles

NAPERVILLE, Ill. (May 24, 2017) – June is National Smile Month, and new Delta Dental of Illinois surveys find more reasons to strive for healthy smiles. Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of Illinoisans say a smile can make or break a first impression, and more than half (55 percent) agree that the quality of a smile has some bearing on success.¹ The surveys also highlight areas where Illinoisans can improve their oral health.

“Good oral health is key to overall health and it starts with knowledge and education. Delta Dental of Illinois is dedicated to improving oral health, so we surveyed Illinoisans to find out how they rate the power of their and their children’s smiles and where they could improve,” said Dr. Katina Spadoni, dental director for Delta Dental of Illinois. “We found that while Illinoisans agree that a smile can improve confidence, happiness and success, they also know that their oral health and their children’s oral health aren’t making the grade.”

In fact, less than a third (32 percent) of Illinois parents would give their child an A grade for oral health. And 70 percent admit their child currently has oral health problems, including cavities (26 percent), bad breath (17 percent) or yellowing teeth (17 percent).²

The results of Delta Dental of Illinois’ surveys highlight some of the oral health habits Illinoisans can improve upon.

Brush up: Illinois adults and children are lacking on the basic oral health habit of brushing. Teeth should be brushed for two minutes twice a day. Yet, more than a third (36 percent) of Illinois parents say their child’s teeth are brushed less than twice a day. More than one third (34 percent) of Illinois adults don’t brush their teeth the recommended two times each day, and nearly two in three (65 percent) skip a brushing at least once per month.

Floss regularly: Flossing once a day is important to remove plaque buildup in between teeth that can't be reached by brushing. Although important to help prevent cavities, nearly three out of four (74 percent) Illinois parents say their children's teeth are flossed less than once a day.

Starting good oral health habits by age 1: Children should visit the dentist by age 1 or within six months after the first tooth comes in, but only 15 percent of Illinois parents took their children to the dentist by their first birthday. Establishing good oral health habits at an early age, such as visiting the dentist, helps ensure a healthy smile for a lifetime.

Visiting the dentist regularly: In the past year, 35 percent of Illinois adults visited the dentist less than once. Delta Dental of Illinois recommends that adults visit the dentist at least once a year or more frequently, if needed. Visiting the dentist regularly promotes good oral health as well as good overall health. The dentist can detect over 120 health conditions that have symptoms that affect the mouth, such as diabetes and heart disease. In addition, Delta Dental of Illinois' survey shows that people who visit the dentist regularly are more likely to rate their oral health and overall well-being better than individuals who do not visit the dentist on a regular basis.

For more tips on taking care of you and your children's smiles, 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 6,000 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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¹Delta Dental of Illinois Adult Oral Health & Well-Being Survey, 2017.

²Delta Dental of Illinois Children's Oral Health Survey, 2017.