PHP
PARTNERS HEALTH PLAN ™

Your Plan
YOUR WAY
PHP Care Complete FIDA-IDD Plan
(Medicare - Medicaid Plan)

Mouth Health Plays a Key Role in Your General Health

Why is a healthy mouth important?

Healthcare for your teeth, gums and the lining of your mouth, known as Oral Health, is important to prevent mouth and facial pain, sores, infections and other diseases in your mouth that can affect biting, chewing, smiling and speaking. In addition, inflammation in your mouth has been linked to heart disease, arterial blockage, stroke, pneumonia and infections throughout your body.

What if I am afraid or do not like the dentist's office?

First, know that you are not alone. People put off going to the dentist too often for a variety of reasons, such as **you might be worried it will hurt or the office may have some strange equipment, sounds and smells**. Or maybe you just haven't gone in a while and you are worried about what the dentist might say. So, what can you do?

1 **Speak up and talk to your dentist** about your fears or anxiety.

2 You may need to think about **a desensitization visit** prior to having oral care. **That means a visit to the dentist's office to meet your doctor, see the equipment and talk about what will happen on the day of the visit for care** . This is a great option if you are very nervous. **Ask your PHP Care Team for more information today about desensitization.** Your Care Team can also help connect you with a dentist in your area and **help with scheduling this service, new and routine appointments and transportation**

Why should I go to the dentist if I do not have any problems with my teeth?

Going to the dentist for a once-a-year checkup is important. The dentist may give you **new advice on how to continue to prevent mouth issues**, advice related to how medication changes may affect your mouth health or how a new medical diagnosis such as Diabetes may affect your mouth care. At an annual visit the dentist **may spot a new problem and with early treatment prevent it from becoming a big problem.**

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What should I be doing to look after my oral health?

There are **many things you can do** to look after your oral health!

Brush your teeth! You should brush your teeth at least twice a day for at least 2 minutes at a time.

Floss your teeth once a day.

Get a new toothbrush every 3-4 months.

Go to the dentist at least once a year or more often if recommended by the dentist.

Use mouthwash if recommended by your dentist as part of your daily oral care routine.

Where can I get more information?

The American Dental Association has lots of great tips for looking after your oral health. Learn more at: www.ada.org/en. **The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research** also provides I/DD specific resources and information: www.nidcr.nih.gov/health-info/developmental-disabilities/more-info.