



# HEALTH MATTERS

A PUBLICATION FOR TRICARE® BENEFICIARIES

The Dentist is In ...

## Keep Alert In The Fight Against Oral Cancers



Col. James Honey  
Chief, TRICARE Dental  
Care Section  
Defense Health Agency

During regular checkups, your dentist will examine your mouth, tongue, and throat for potential signs of oral cancer. Oral cancers include both oral cavity and oropharynx cancers. The designation depends on where the cancerous lesion is located within the mouth, lips, or throat.

At your checkup, the dentist will look for red or white sores, lumps, and rough spots in your mouth. If you notice any of these symptoms on your own, or experience pain or an unusual feeling when you're chewing, swallowing, speaking, or moving your tongue or jaw, visit your dentist. If a suspicious or abnormal lesion is identified, it will be tested further to make a diagnosis.

Research shows that you can minimize your risk of getting oral cancer. Oral cancers typically develop in people over 50 who smoke, drink alcohol excessively, or use smokeless tobacco products. Lip cancers can be caused by repeated, prolonged exposure to the sun. Infection with some forms of the human papilloma virus (HPV) increases risks of developing oral cancers. Also, men are twice as likely as women to get oral cancer.

More than 10,000 people die in the U.S each year due to oral cancers, according to the American Cancer Society. Early detection and diagnosis can increase your likelihood of successful treatment and, ultimately, survival. Regular dental check-ups help with early detection, so visit your dentist, minimize your risk factors, and stay vigilant in the fight against oral cancer.

Thank you,  
Col. James Honey



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### ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

#### Choosing a Dentist

Whether you are CONUS or OCONUS, here are a few things you should know when choosing a dentist.

See [pages 2 and 3](#).

#### Learn About Pregnancy Dental Benefits

TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) coverage includes two dental cleanings every 12 months, but you can get an extra routine cleaning during pregnancy. See [page 4](#).

#### Caring for Baby's First Teeth

You can begin taking your child for covered dental visits as soon as he or she turns age 1 and is enrolled in the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP). See [page 6](#).

## Understand Your Options: CONUS Network and Non-Network Dentists

Did you know you can visit any licensed dentist in the CONUS service area? However, staying in the network will save you money. And you also won't need to submit any paperwork. Network dentists agree to rules and costs for care. These are negotiated and set by United Concordia and the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP). This means you won't pay more than the applicable cost-share for covered services at a network provider. The negotiated fee is usually lower than the normal rate in your area, so visiting a network dentist is the best financial choice.

### Network Dentists

Go to [www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com) to find a network dentist. If you're already visiting a dentist in your area, make sure to check that your provider is still in the network. If not, use the "Nominate Your Dentist" tool to nominate him or her to United Concordia. You may also contact United Concordia for assistance finding a network dentist.

### Non-Network Dentists

Dentists who haven't signed a contract with United Concordia are non-network dentists. You can visit non-network dentists, but you may be billed the full cost of care. You must pay your cost-share, plus the difference between the TRICARE-allowable charge and the amount charged by the dentist. You may also have to file your own claims. ★

## Foods that Help Strengthen Your Teeth

Don't let summer set back your dental health. Maintaining a good dental regimen is important all year long. Summer may increase the risk of cavities and poor dental upkeep due to extended daylight hours and vacation time. Luckily, according to the American Dental Association, some summer festive foods can increase your dental health and strengthen your teeth. Here are a few dental friendly foods that are sure to be a hit during summer pool parties and beach retreats.

### Crunch, But Hold the Chips

Adding foods such as apples and pears to your fruit platter and stocking your veggie tray with carrots, celery, and raw broccoli can produce the same crunch craving of potato chips with added benefits. These crunchy alternatives act like toothbrushes, scrubbing off build-up and stimulating saliva to wash away what's left.

### Crushed, not Cubed

A cold drink may be your best friend on those hot summer days, but ice is your enemy. Chewing on hard foods like ice can leave your teeth vulnerable to cracking, breaks, and enamel damage. Consider putting cans and bottles in a tub of ice so your guests won't be tempted to crunch a few cubes when they're done with their drinks.

### Water Infusion

Soda and sports drinks are bad for your teeth because they eat away at your tooth enamel, cause dry mouth, and are loaded with sugar. Water is your best choice. Serve your guests a pitcher of water with a twist of fruit. Infused waters are hydrating and low in sugar (Go easy on citrus fruits. The acid in lemons and limes can be harsh on your teeth).

### Minty Fresh

Your guests may be looking for something to freshen their breath after dinner. Swap out a bowl of mints for sugar-free gum. Studies using gum with the ADA Seal of Acceptance show that chewing sugarless gum for 20 minutes following meals may help prevent tooth decay. Chewing sugar-free gum gets saliva flowing to wash away food and fights acids produced by cavity-causing bacteria from eating your teeth. ★





## Maintaining Good Oral Health

Consistent, healthy practices will lead to a lifetime of good oral health. According to the Department of Health and Human Services “Healthy People 2020” campaign, ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov)) the health of your teeth, mouth, and surrounding craniofacial (skull and face) structures is central to overall health and well-being. Good oral health can prevent oral and craniofacial diseases and conditions like cancers, tooth decay, gum disease, and others.

Incorporate these tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to maintain a healthy mouth and strong teeth:

- Drink fluoridated water and brush with fluoride toothpaste. Studies show drinking water with fluoride can help prevent tooth decay by at least 25 percent.
- Practice good oral hygiene. Brush teeth thoroughly and floss between teeth to remove dental plaque. Brush for two minutes, twice a day.
- Visit your dentist regularly, even if you have no natural teeth or have dentures.
- Quit smoking and other tobacco products.
- Limit alcoholic drinks.

What you put in your mouth affects your general health as well as your teeth and gums. Sugar can be a cavity culprit because it feeds cavity-causing bacteria in your mouth. The resulting acid can create holes in your enamel.

Brush teeth twice a day for two minutes, clean between your teeth once a day, eat a healthy diet, and see your dentist regularly. With proper care, your teeth will last a lifetime. Although different life stages may require different types of care, excellent dental health is possible at any age. Discover more resources for taking care of your teeth at every age at [www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov). ★

## Understand Your Options: OCONUS Dentists

In OCONUS locations, dentists may ask you to pay for covered services upfront. A TRICARE OCONUS Preferred Dentist (TOPD) will not require you to pay their full charge at the time of service, but only any applicable cost-share. A TOPD will also submit your claim paperwork.

If you're OCONUS, use the “Find a Dentist – OCONUS” tool to help you find a dentist near you at [www.uccitdp.com/tp2opd](http://www.uccitdp.com/tp2opd). Remember, under the TDP, you have the option to find any dental provider on your own and receive care from him or her in any OCONUS location. ★

## Go to My Account for Cost and Benefit Information

Curious about the benefits available to you or the cost of recommended care? Go to “My Account” on the TRICARE Dental Program website at [www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com) and get comprehensive information about your care and estimated costs. You can also check the status of claims, the amount of benefit remaining, as well as other helpful benefit information for you and your family members. ★

## Keep Your DEERS Information Current

To remain eligible for TRICARE coverage, you must keep your information current in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). It's essential to update and verify your information in DEERS anytime you have a Qualifying Life Event. For example, after you arrive at a new duty station or location, update your information in DEERS.

You can make changes in person, by phone, online, or by mail.

### Add or Remove Family Members

- In person: Visit a local ID card office. Find an office near you at [www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl](http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl).

### Update Contact Information

- Phone: Call 1-800-538-9552 (TTY/TDD: 1-866-363-2883) or fax updates to 1-831-655-8317
- Online: Log into milConnect at <https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil>
- Mail: Mail updates to:

Defense Manpower Data Center  
Support Office  
Attention: COA  
400 Gigling Road  
Seaside, CA 93955-6771

Find more information about DEERS at [www.tricare.mil/deers](http://www.tricare.mil/deers). To learn more about Qualifying Life Events, visit [www.tricare.mil/lifevents](http://www.tricare.mil/lifevents). ★

## Learn About Pregnancy Dental Benefits

It's important to maintain good oral health while pregnant because you may be at increased risk for dental disease. According to the American Dental Association, as many as half of all women develop pregnancy gingivitis, a mild form of temporary gum disease, most common between the second and eighth month of pregnancy. Hormones make your gums more easily irritated by plaque and can cause gums to bleed and be red, tender, sore.

Your dentist may recommend additional cleanings during your second and third trimester to help control gingivitis. TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) coverage includes two dental cleanings every 12 months, but you can get an extra routine cleaning during pregnancy. There's no cost for cleanings by network dentists. You must register your condition or special need in "My Account" on the TDP website at [www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com) prior to getting treatment.

The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists states that procedures like cavity fillings and crowns are safe and important to have during pregnancy to prevent potential infection. The TDP also covers these procedures.

Follow these tips to maintain good oral health while pregnant:

- Schedule a dental checkup early in your pregnancy or if you're thinking about becoming pregnant.
- Get your teeth cleaned more often, especially if you see:
  - Plaque buildup
  - Red and puffy gums
  - Bleeding after brushing and flossing
- Brush and floss after you eat.
- Stay away from sugary foods that cause tooth decay.

Staying away from sugary foods and eating healthy while pregnant also benefits your unborn child. Your baby's teeth begin to develop between the third and sixth month of pregnancy, and eating well can help them form correctly. ★





## Enrolling in the TRICARE Dental Program

You can enroll in the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) by web, phone, or mail. You'll pay your first monthly premium when you enroll. You can also set up automatic payments for ongoing premium payments. See the options for enrollment below:

- **By Phone:**

CONUS: 1-844-653-4061

OCONUS: 1-844-653-4060 / 1-717-888-7400 (Toll)

TDD/TTY service for the hearing impaired: 711

- **Online (CONUS only):**

- Go to the Beneficiary Web Enrollment (BWE) website at <https://bwe.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/bwe>.
- Click on the red "Log On" link at the top of the page. You must have a Common Access Card (CAC), DFAS (MyPay) Account, or a DoD Self Service Logon (DS Logon) Premium (Level 2) account to log in.
- Select the "Dental" tab to enroll in a dental plan.

*Note: Only sponsors can enroll themselves and their family members through BWE.*

- **By Mail:** Download the TRICARE Dental Program Enrollment/Change Authorization Form. Mail the completed form and the initial premium payment by check, money order, or credit card to United Concordia at:

United Concordia TRICARE Dental Program  
P.O. Box 645547  
Pittsburgh, PA 15264

You must enroll for a minimum of 12 months and there must be 12 months remaining on your sponsor's service commitment. Unless you have a valid reason to end coverage, you must complete the first 12-month enrollment period. After the 12-month period, you can continue on a month-to-month basis.

Check out the *TRICARE Dental Program Handbook* and *TRICARE Dental Program Benefit Brochure* on the TRICARE website ([www.tricare.mil/publications](http://www.tricare.mil/publications)) to read about exceptions to the minimum enrollment period.

### Disenrollment

Once enrolled in the TDP, you're committed to 12 months of coverage unless you qualify for an exception. After 12 months, you can disenroll from the program by completing a new TRICARE Dental Program Enrollment/Change Authorization Form. You can be disenrolled if you don't pay your TDP monthly premium(s). For a list of scenarios that could change or terminate your coverage refer to the TRICARE Dental Program Handbook.

If you lose coverage because you didn't pay your monthly premium(s), or are voluntarily disenrolled for other than an authorized reason, you won't be able to reenroll for a 12-month period. This lock-out period begins the month following the last month that you paid your premium(s). ★

## Teaching Your Kids Healthy Dental Habits

Make sure your kids head back to school with clean teeth and healthy habits, regardless of age.

Here are a few tips for parents from the American Dental Association (ADA):

- **Establish brushing as a family activity:** Lead by example and your kids will follow. Don't just set a timer and supervise brushing. Make brushing twice a day for two minutes an event. Play your child's favorite song and have a two-minute dance party together.
- **Start a routine and stick to it:** You may be tempted to let your child skip brushing after a long day or during times when your schedule is different (like vacation), but keep at it. Consistency is the key to developing strong habits.
- **Reward good brushing behavior:** What motivates your child? Stickers? Make a reward chart and let him or her add one every time he or she brushes. If your child is a reader, let him or her pick out the bedtime story.
- **Go shopping for fun tooth brushing materials:** Let your child pick out his or her own toothbrush and toothpaste, preferably one with the ADA Seal of Acceptance. Choosing a character toothbrush or a fluoride toothpaste in an interesting flavor or color makes basic brushing more exciting. ★

## Caring for Baby's First Teeth

You can begin to take your child for covered dental visits as soon as he or she reaches age 1 and is enrolled in the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP). This may seem early, but cavities can form as soon as your baby has teeth. You may also enroll your child prior to his or her first birthday if you wish. Being proactive about your child's dental health today can help keep his or her smile healthy for life.

Dental problems can begin early, even before your baby gets his or her first tooth. Begin cleaning your baby's gums right away using a soft infant toothbrush or cloth and water. The most common dental problem at this age is early childhood caries, also known as "baby bottle tooth decay." Avoid it by giving your baby water at bedtime instead of milk or juice. Water from the faucet instead of bottled water is often best for your baby. Nearly 75 percent of the water supply in the U.S. contains fluoride. When you put your baby to sleep with a bottle of milk or juice, the liquid will remain on his or her teeth at night. This allows acids to develop that break down tooth enamel, and eventually leads to tooth decay.

As soon as your child's teeth appear, start brushing twice a day:

- Use fluoridated toothpaste and a soft, age-appropriate-sized toothbrush.
- Use only a smear of toothpaste for children under age 2.
- Use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste for children ages 2-5.

Watch your child brush his or her teeth and help them get to those hard-to-reach places, especially in the back of the mouth. Help your child floss daily to get loose food particles stuck between teeth. Your child's dentist or oral hygienist can show you the best technique. Ask your dentist about applying dental sealants to chewing surfaces of teeth. Sealants are a preventive service covered by TRICARE. ★





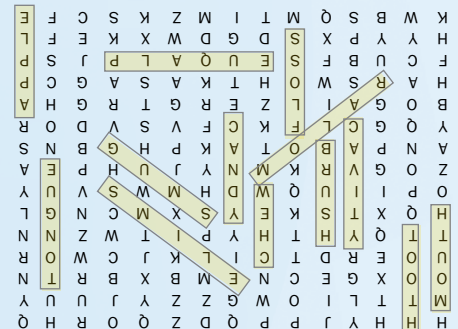
# Word Search

- TOOTH**
- BRUSH**
- FLOSS**
- GUMS**
- TONGUE**
- MOLAR**
- CAVITY**
- PLAQUE**
- MOUTH**
- CHEW**
- CANDY**
- APPLE**
- SMILE**

H	H	H	Y	J	P	P	Q	D	Z	Q	O	R	H	Q
M	T	T	L	I	O	W	G	Z	Z	Y	J	U	U	Y
O	O	X	G	E	C	N	E	M	B	X	B	R	T	N
U	O	E	R	D	T	C	I	L	K	J	C	W	O	R
T	T	Q	Y	H	T	H	Y	P	I	T	W	Z	N	N
H	Q	X	T	S	K	E	Y	S	X	M	C	N	G	L
O	P	I	I	U	Q	W	D	H	M	W	S	V	U	Y
Z	O	G	V	R	K	M	N	Y	J	U	H	P	E	A
A	N	P	A	B	O	T	A	K	P	H	G	B	N	S
Y	Q	G	C	L	F	K	C	F	V	S	V	D	O	R
B	O	G	A	I	L	Z	E	R	G	T	R	G	H	A
H	A	R	S	W	O	H	T	K	A	S	A	G	C	P
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H	Y	Y	P	X	S	D	G	D	W	X	K	E	F	L
K	W	B	S	Q	M	T	I	M	Z	K	S	C	F	E

## TRICARE TOOTH TIP

**Brush your teeth after breakfast and before you go to bed.**



Answer:



# HEALTH MATTERS

United Concordia Companies, Inc.  
 TRICARE Dental Program  
 P.O. Box 69450  
 Harrisburg, PA 17106

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## CHECK THIS OUT...

### Interested in Dental Coverage?

Learn how to sign up yourself and eligible family members for TRICARE Dental Program coverage. Options include online, by phone, or by mail.

See Page 5.

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## Costs for TRICARE Dental Program Care

SERVICES AND DEDUCTIBLES	YOU PAY
<b>Diagnostic, preventive (including sealants)</b>	0%
<b>Basic restorative</b>	20%
<b>Endodontic, periodontic, oral surgery</b>	Pay grades E-1 through E-4: 30% All others: 40%
<b>Prosthodontic, implant, orthodontic</b>	50%
<b>Yearly deductible</b>	\$0

MAXIMUM TYPE	AMOUNT ALLOWED
<b>Non-orthodontic service maximum*</b>	\$1,500 (per person, per contract year, May 1–April 30)
<b>Orthodontic lifetime maximum</b>	\$1,750 (per person, per lifetime)

\* Orthodontic diagnostic service charges are applied towards the non-orthodontic service maximum, but other diagnostic and preventive service charges are not.

### TRICARE DENTAL PROGRAM RESOURCES

[www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com)

#### ENROLLMENT AND BILLING SERVICES

1-844-653-4061 (CONUS)

1-844-653-4060 (OCONUS)  
 1-717-888-7400 (OCONUS)

711 (TDD/TTY)

#### CLAIMS FILING

CONUS:  
 United Concordia  
 TRICARE Dental Program  
 P.O. Box 69451  
 Harrisburg, PA 17106

OCONUS:  
 United Concordia  
 TRICARE Dental Program  
 P.O. Box 69452  
 Harrisburg, PA 17106

#### BENEFICIARY WEB ENROLLMENT

[www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/bwe](http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/bwe)