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**top dental
trends of 2016**

**have a sweet
valentine's day
minus the sugar!**

**5 common ingredients
in toothpaste**

**how does dual
coverage work?**

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9 feature article top dental trends of 2016



cavity-free calendar

December

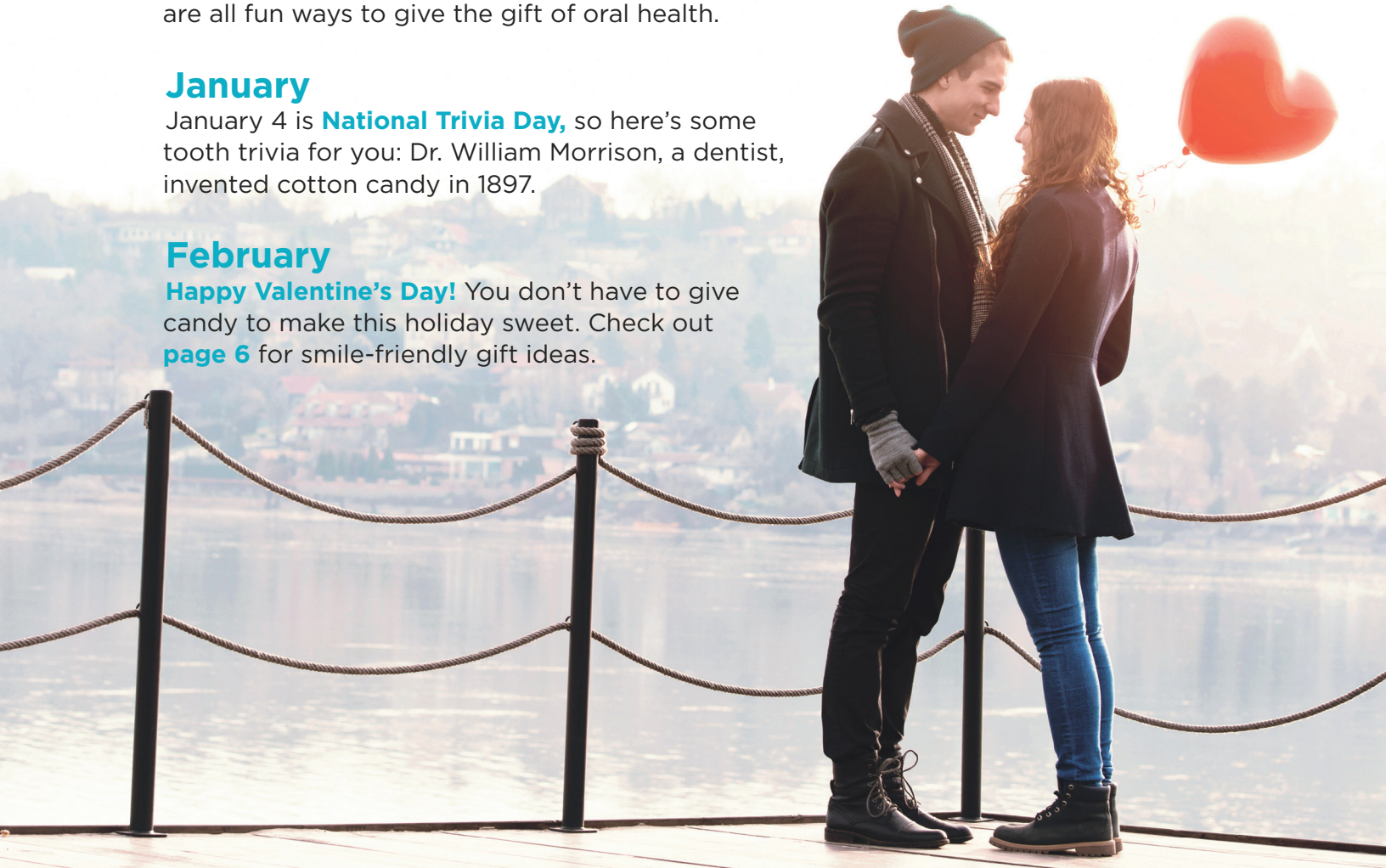
Happy holidays! Flavored floss, new toothbrushes (manual or electric!) and unique toothbrush holders are all fun ways to give the gift of oral health.

January

January 4 is **National Trivia Day**, so here's some tooth trivia for you: Dr. William Morrison, a dentist, invented cotton candy in 1897.

February

Happy Valentine's Day! You don't have to give candy to make this holiday sweet. Check out [page 6](#) for smile-friendly gift ideas.



two-word answers

Q: What type of toothbrush do most people use?

A: Soft-bristled

See page 5 to find out why.





on topic with dr. kohn

floss is still boss

Meet Delta Dental's Vice President of Dental Science and Policy, Bill Kohn, DDS. Formerly the director of the Division of Oral Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Kohn has timely tips and valuable insights to share as our resident dental expert.

The U.S. Department of Health's latest updates to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans exclude the recommendation to floss, and there have been several recent studies that questioned its effectiveness. It's true; the published evidence to support flossing to prevent gum disease or tooth decay is weak at best. However, lack of evidence doesn't necessarily mean lack of effectiveness. Here's what we know for sure: Flossing is an affordable and easy way to remove plaque, a major cause of both tooth decay and gum disease. If you follow this simple practice daily, along with good basic habits like brushing with fluoride toothpaste, eating a healthy diet, avoiding tobacco and getting regular dental checkups, you will help prevent gum disease and tooth decay. Our simple advice: Keep on flossing, America.

mouth-friendly recipe: bell pepper pizzas

Everyone loves pizza - and this version is actually good for you! The bell pepper slices have vitamins C and E, which are good for gum health. And, the layer of cheese provides calcium for strong teeth and bones.

Ingredients:

1 large bell pepper
1/4 cup spaghetti sauce or pizza sauce
Herbs and spices to taste - try basil, parsley and oregano
1/4 cup grated mozzarella cheese
Toppings of your choice

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 F. Cut the bell pepper in half and lay the halves on a baking sheet, cut side up. Add sauce, herbs, cheese and toppings of your choice. Bake for 8 minutes, then switch to broil for 2 minutes to crisp the cheese. Remove from oven and enjoy!





readers ask, we answer

Linda asks:

“What’s the difference between extra-soft, soft, medium and firm-bristled toothbrushes, and which one should I use?”

Hi, Linda. Though there are a variety of bristles available, almost everyone should opt for toothbrushes with soft bristles. It’s easy to assume that firm and medium-bristled toothbrushes provide more cleaning power, but the truth is that brushing with stiffer bristles can actually damage the gums, root surface and enamel.

Your dentist may recommend extra-soft bristles if you experience tooth sensitivity or other issues, but stick with soft unless you’re told otherwise.

We *do* have one use for firm-bristled toothbrushes: They’re great for household cleaning!



Have a question you’d like us to answer? Send it to grin@deltadental.com, and it could be featured in an upcoming issue.

have a sweet valentine's day minus the sugar!

Whether it's the box of chocolates from your significant other or the mountain of candy kids bring home from school, Valentine's Day isn't a lovefest for teeth. Make the holiday a little more smile-friendly with these sweet tips.



Cut out the classroom candy.

You don't have to send sticky sweets for your kids' traditional classroom exchanges. Let them get creative with their gift giving by helping you shop for small, inexpensive toys to give their classmates. Bouncy balls, stickers, bubbles, glow sticks or crayons are all fun options.



Go no-sugar for your sweetie.

Ditch the cliché heart-shaped box of chocolates and opt for something more personal. Spend time cooking a favorite meal, practice the lost art of letter writing or frame a favorite photo. If the day doesn't feel complete without sweets, make a sugar-free dessert. Strawberries and homemade sugar-free whipped cream, anyone?



Send some lunchtime love.

If your child or special someone takes lunch to school or work, slip an extra smile-friendly snack in the bag, along with a note that goes with the theme. A few ideas to try:



Choose your chocolate wisely.

If you simply can't make it through the holiday without indulging in candy, chocolate is your best bet – especially dark chocolate, which contains less sugar than milk chocolate. Both dark and milk chocolate varieties are rinsed from teeth more easily than sticky sweets like taffy or gummy candies, making them the most smile-friendly sweet options. Avoid chocolates with fillings like caramel, toffee, cookie pieces or heavy syrups.

Finally, there's one more gift your significant other or children will be thrilled to receive – a happy, healthy smile from you. Happy Valentine's Day!

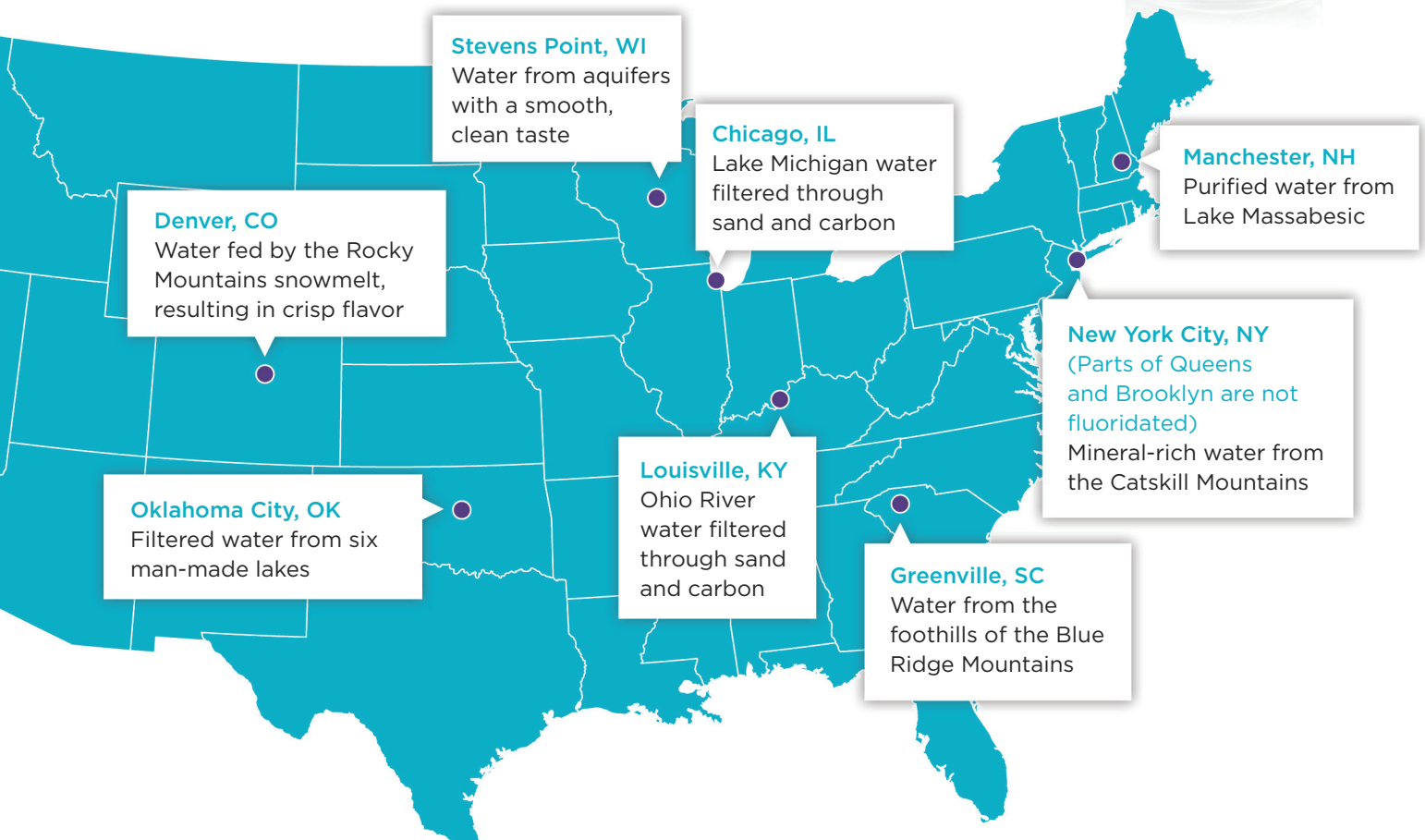


history of oral health: tap into delicious H₂O

When it comes to quenching your thirst, an ice-cold glass of water can't be beat – and wetting your whistle helps your oral health. Staying hydrated rinses cavity-causing debris and bacteria from teeth, which also can help prevent bad breath.

Additionally, a majority of U.S. community water systems add fluoride to the water. If your community is one of them, your teeth receive a small dose of the decay-preventing mineral every time you turn the tap. Even if you run your water through a filtration system, you'll most likely still receive the benefits of fluoridated water (reverse osmosis systems will remove most of the fluoride, however).

Though H₂O from the tap sometimes gets a bad rap, most community water systems make it so clear and delicious, you'll be thirsting for more. Check out eight of the best-tasting fluoridated tap waters in the country, according to *Rodale's Organic Life* magazine.



Stevens Point, WI
Water from aquifers with a smooth, clean taste

Chicago, IL
Lake Michigan water filtered through sand and carbon

Manchester, NH
Purified water from Lake Massabesic

Denver, CO
Water fed by the Rocky Mountains snowmelt, resulting in crisp flavor

New York City, NY
(Parts of Queens and Brooklyn are not fluoridated)
Mineral-rich water from the Catskill Mountains

Oklahoma City, OK
Filtered water from six man-made lakes

Louisville, KY
Ohio River water filtered through sand and carbon

Greenville, SC
Water from the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains





top dental trends of 2016

The dental industry evolves every year as we learn more and innovate more - and 2016 was no exception! Check out these recent trends.

Dental Pop-Up Clinics

A healthy smile shouldn't be a luxury. To help people who can't afford to get the dental care they need, many nonprofits have organized pop-up clinics where dentists and hygienists volunteer their time to provide certain services for free.

Helping people who couldn't otherwise afford healthy smiles is certainly a trend we support. Delta Dental is proud to back similar clinics across the U.S. to provide cleanings, exams and treatments to individuals and families in need of dental care.



A word from Dr. Kohn: Finding new ways to help people get the dental care they need is a trend we hope sticks around. Delta Dental is committed to improving dental health by supporting programs that focus on preventing dental disease, expanding access to dental care and advancing dental education and science. In 2015, Delta Dental member companies donated more than \$50 million to these causes.



The Next Generation of Teeth Whitening Systems

Teeth whitening isn't just cosmetic – feeling good about your smile can improve your confidence and attitude. There are many ways to lighten up yellowed or stained teeth, from professional gels and treatments to over-the-counter strips, all of which can leave teeth feeling sensitive afterward. To minimize sensitivity, the latest at-home versions release bleaching agents over a long period of time.



A word from Dr. Kohn: All teeth whitening products work by releasing hydrogen peroxide. Home-use products, including white strips or trays with gel, usually work well but require daily use over a week or two. If time is of the essence, you may want to consider in-office whitening. It will cost you more, but it is a speedier process because dentists can use a higher concentration of bleaching agents than over-the-counter products. Also, dentists have more control over the procedure than you have with at-home options.

Electric Toothbrushes with Bluetooth

At first glance – or should we say, first brush – having a toothbrush with connectivity may seem like technology overkill. But Bluetooth-enabled toothbrushes can make users more aware of their habits when paired with a smartphone app. They can tell the user when to reduce pressure and when to focus cleaning on a new quadrant of the mouth. Bluetooth-brushes also provide a summary of progress over time and can even send notifications if the user has gone too long between brushings.



A word from Dr. Kohn: If being connected to a toothbrush with lots of tech options helps keep you interested in this otherwise mundane task, then by all means, give one a try. While there is some evidence that electric toothbrushes remove more decay and gum disease-causing plaque than manual brushes, they both work well if you do the job right. Though I sometimes use one of my electric marvels, I still use my trusty soft-bristled toothbrush most of the time.



3-D Printing

As 3-D printing technology continues to become more widely available and affordable, amazing ways to use it keep appearing everywhere. Three-dimensional digital impressions, milling and printing are common in dental offices and dental laboratories to help fabricate crowns, dentures and other dental devices. Dutch researchers are even working on a 3-D printed tooth made from an antimicrobial plastic that kills the bacteria that cause tooth decay.

Though the antimicrobial teeth haven't been tested on humans yet, there are other 3-D printed projects ready for immediate use. As another example, 3-D printed mouth models that include realistic gum textures are now being made for dentists to use when explaining dental procedures to patients.



A word from Dr. Kohn: Dentistry continues to become more comfortable and convenient for the patient, and 3-D printing is now improving dental laboratory procedures as well. This includes creating accurate anatomical models of teeth and gums, frameworks for partial dentures, dental implants, screws, dentures and surgical guides for implants. In the not-too-distant future, 3-D printing has promised to revolutionize medicine and dentistry by printing with cells and creating organs and body parts – including tooth implants and jaw bones.

Dental Lasers

As with 3-D printing, laser technology is becoming more advanced every day. In the dental industry, this can mean painless, anesthesia-free dental procedures that, in certain cases, are also faster, more precise and cause less bleeding.



A word from Dr. Kohn: We are not ready to completely do away with the drill just yet, but lasers are becoming much more common in dentistry. They can replace a drill or knife in minor tooth preparation or soft tissue surgery, and can prepare a tooth for a simple filling, often without the need for anesthetic. Lasers are used in root canal treatment, periodontal care, oral surgery and as a diagnostic tool for tooth decay and oral cancer. I think we'll continue to see more dental uses for lasers as more research proves their effectiveness – and as manufacturers continue to work toward economical, multi-purpose lasers.

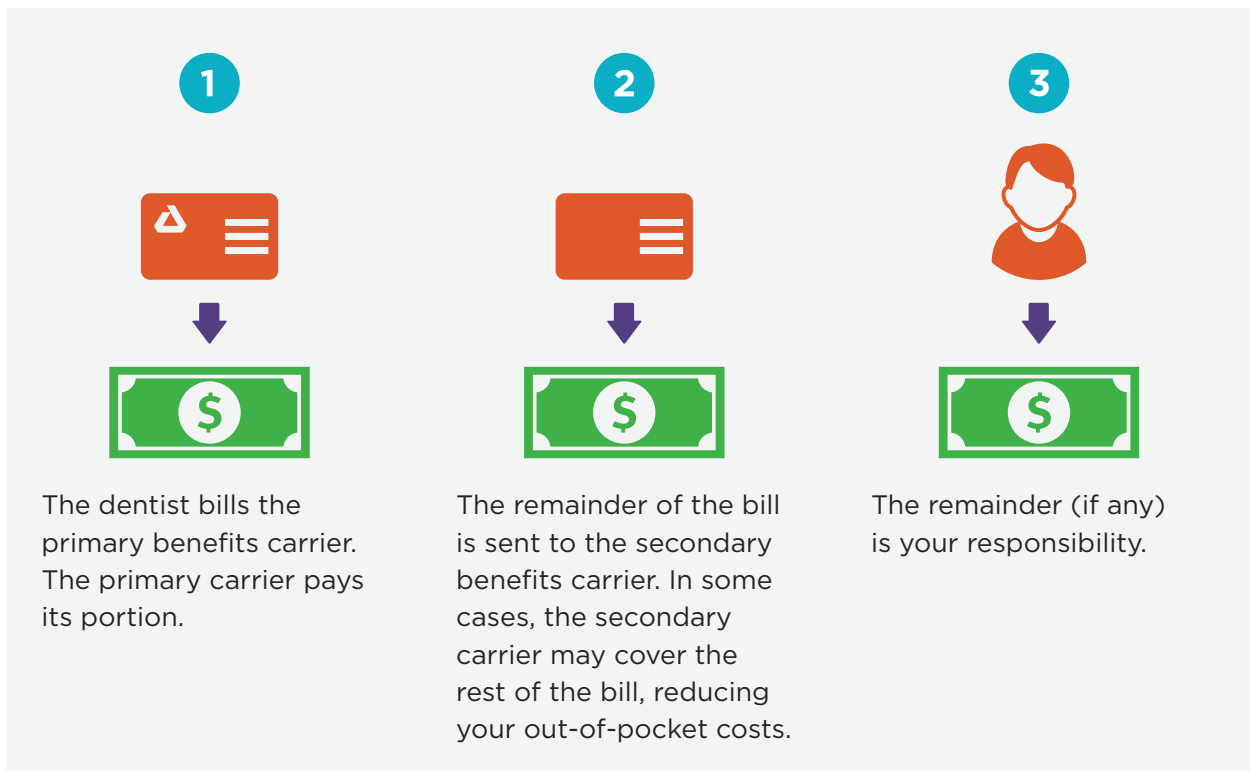


how does dual coverage work?

It's not uncommon to have coverage under two dental plans. For example, your children may have dental benefits through your employer and your spouse's employer. Anyone with dental coverage under two separate plans has dual coverage.

How It Works

The way benefits carriers work together when a person has dual coverage is called coordination of benefits or COB. Dual coverage *does not* mean double benefits. For example, if both of your plans cover two cleanings per year, having dual coverage won't provide coverage for four cleanings. Here's how it works:



An exception to the rule: Some dental plans have a non-duplication of benefits clause. This rule prevents secondary plan coverage if the primary plan already paid as much or more than the secondary plan would have covered had it been primary. Check your plan information to see if your secondary plan has this rule before using your benefits.

Determining Which Plan Is Primary

The primary plan is the one billed first. The plan billed after the primary carrier has paid its portion is called the secondary plan. Which plan is primary varies by situation.



For yourself:

Your primary carrier is typically the coverage you receive through your employer. Additional coverage through a spouse will be secondary.



For yourself, if you have two jobs:

If you have dental benefits through both employers, the primary plan is usually the one that has provided coverage the longest.



For your children:

The parent whose birthday falls first in the calendar year will have the primary plan. For example, if your birthday is August 9, and your spouse's birthday is July 21, your spouse's plan would be the primary plan. Birth year is not a factor.

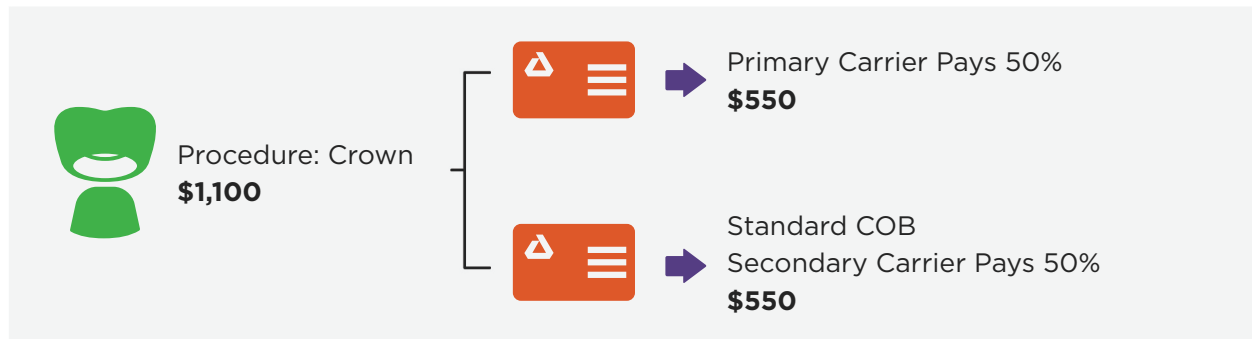


For children of divorced parents:

Primary benefits are typically through the parent with the most custody but can vary.

When Both Plans Are Delta Dental Plans

Dual coverage still applies if both of the plans are Delta Dental plans. The primary plan is billed first, and the secondary plan is billed next. Below is an example of standard COB. This example assumes your deductible has already been met and you haven't reached your annual maximum.



If your primary or secondary plan is an HMO-type plan (such as DeltaCare® USA), please contact your carrier for specifics on how dual coverage is handled.

5 COMMON INGREDIENTS *in toothpaste*

You spend a lot of time using toothpaste. If you're diligent about brushing for the recommended two minutes twice a day, you'll spend 24 hours brushing your teeth every year! But in all that time, have you ever stopped to investigate the contents of the tube? The ingredient list can be long and full of terms you're likely not familiar with. Let us interpret for you.



FLUORIDE. This ingredient helps safely and effectively prevent tooth decay by making enamel more resistant to acid. Toothpaste should always contain fluoride – just adjust the amount of toothpaste you put on the toothbrush for yourself versus your children. Under age 3, a dab about the size of a grain of rice will do; from ages 3 to 6, a pea-size dot is all that's needed. Sodium fluoride, sodium monofluorophosphate and stannous fluoride are the three fluoride toothpaste ingredients recognized by the FDA for cavity prevention.



GLYCEROL/GLYCERIN. This ingredient helps hold moisture, keeps the paste together and helps it glide smoothly from the tube. Glycerol is similar to other ingredients such as sorbitol and glycol.



SORBITOL. Sorbitol plays two parts: Along with glycerol, it helps hold the toothpaste together, and it's also a sweetening agent. Saccharin is another common sweetener. Neither actually contains sugar.

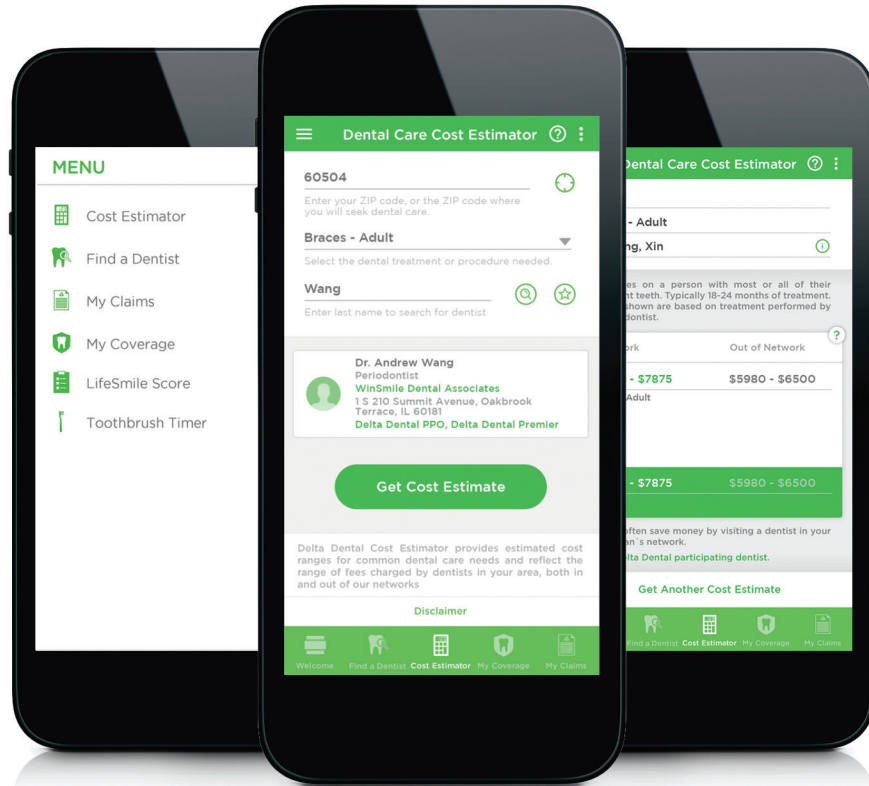


CALCIUM CARBONATE. This is a common abrasive, which helps safely remove plaque, debris and surface stains. The abrasive, combined with the scrubbing motion of your toothbrush, cleans the tooth surface without damaging the enamel. Other abrasives in toothpaste include dehydrated silica gels, hydrated aluminum oxides, magnesium carbonate, phosphate salts and silicates.



SODIUM LAURYL SULFATE. If your toothpaste foams, detergent ingredients are the reason. The detergents create that satisfying, slightly sudsy reaction many types of toothpaste have. A similar foaming agent is sodium N-Lauryl sarcosinate. Sodium lauryl sulfate can cause mouth irritations in some people. To ease irritations, use a toothpaste without this foaming agent that's recommended by your dentist.





keeping you covered: **Delta Dental Cost Estimator**

Wondering how much your next visit to the dentist will cost you? Plan ahead with the Delta Dental Cost Estimator. You'll get a range of estimates reflecting local costs for the most common dental procedures.

Ready to get an estimate? Anyone can access the tool at deltadental.com, but Delta Dental members also can access the tool via our free Delta Dental mobile app once signed in. However you access it, simply enter your ZIP code, then select from an extensive list of common dental treatments and procedures. Logged-in members will receive a comparison of in- and out-of-network dentist charges, and can even get an estimate based on your specific dentist or specialist. Your benefits may pay a portion of the cost, and you also may be required to pay a portion of the cost yourself.

The Delta Dental Cost Estimator provides an estimate and does not guarantee the exact fees for dental procedures, what your dental benefits plan will cover or your out-of-pocket costs. Estimates should not be construed as financial or medical advice. For more detailed information on your actual dental care costs, please consult your dentist and your dental benefits carrier or request a pre-treatment estimate.

brushing up



Ever wonder what your dentist is really thinking? Grin! wanted to find out, too, so we talked to Delta Dental network dentist Dr. Pooja Khurana in West Orange, New Jersey.

What's the best dental advice you've ever received? The first dentist I ever worked for encouraged me to “never stop learning.” Whether it be attending continuing education courses, participating in local study clubs or getting involved in organized dentistry, I realized early on that learning doesn't stop once you graduate from dental school.

If you could tell patients to stop doing one thing, what would it be? I always encourage my patients to make their dental health a priority and to *not wait* until they are experiencing a toothache or other dental emergency before scheduling an appointment to see me.

Do you have any traditions in your office? My practice mission is: “Creating Healthier Communities..One Smile at a Time.” Philanthropy and community service are an integral part of my professional career. My practice is not just a business, but a platform from which I can extend my skills to treat those most in need throughout the world. To date, I've traveled to Jamaica, Guatemala, Nicaragua and India to serve children who have limited access to dental care. I feel blessed to be able to create healthier communities on a global scale.



If you'd like to recommend your dentist for a Brushing Up interview, email grin@deltadental.com with his or her name and contact information.



dental benefits on the go

Logging in to Delta Dental's free mobile app provides quick and easy access to coverage information, recent claims and even your ID card. Looking for an in-network dentist? Our app can help. You can search for a dentist by network, dental specialty, location or a provider's last name. And by clicking on a dentist's name, you can view additional information, add the dentist to your contacts and get directions to the dental office.

Download our free app today from the App Store or Google Play.

