



# TIPS

from the Consumer Health Action Network

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## Smile! Tips for getting dental care in Connecticut

**Don't wait.** Serious dental problems require attention, and it is important to seek out the care you need. Wait times for appointments can be very long at some community dental clinics (sometimes more than 6 months), so it is important to make an appointment and follow up on care as soon as possible.

**If you have HUSKY, talk to your managed care organization first.** Basic dental care is covered under HUSKY, but all dentists do not accept all plans. You can call your managed care organization to find out about dentists in your area that accept HUSKY.

- If you have BlueCare Family Plan, call Wellpoint Dental Services at (877) 811-3108
- If you have Community Health Network and Preferred One/ Well Care coverage, call BeneCare Dental at (800) 843-4727
- If you have Health Net coverage, call Doral Dental at 800-436-5294

**If you have private insurance, talk to the insurance company first.** They can give you the most current listing of providers who accept your plan, and they can tell you about what services are covered.

**If you are uninsured, check out community health centers and local dental clinics.** Many offer reduced or sliding scale coverage.

- Call INFOLINE at 211 for a basic listing of dental services near you, or
- Call the Consumer Health Action Network at 772-2817 (in New Haven) or 1-888-873-4585 (statewide) for more detailed information about special programs in your area

**Check out screening programs your child's school or at the local health department.** Take advantage of these frequently free programs.

**Call different clinics.** Some clinics have very long waits because of a shortage of dentists. If so, try to call another dentist in your area to see if you can get an appointment sooner. If you are uninsured, calling different clinics and asking the price before your appointment can be a good way to reduce costs.

**Ask what you need to bring.** Income verification may be necessary for sliding scale coverage.

**Follow through.** You deserve dental care. Making appointments can be difficult, but persistence pays off. Let us know if you are having any continued problems.

## Why should I worry about my teeth?

**Dental care is important.** Neglecting your teeth and your gums can lead to serious, chronic pain that can prevent you from doing what you enjoy.

**If you have diabetes, dental care is especially important.** Diabetes increases your risk of gum disease and poor oral health can worsen your diabetes.

**Most dental problems are completely preventable.** Cavities and many gum problems can be avoided with appropriate care of your teeth.

## General Dental Tips To Keep You Healthy

**Watch the sweet tooth!** Not only are sugary foods a leading cause of diabetes, they are also a major cause of cavities. A healthy diet with lots of nutrients also can prevent gum decay.

**Stop smoking.** Not only is smoking bad for your health, but it can stain your teeth and make you 6 times more likely to develop oral cancer.

**Drink tap water.** Unlike most bottled water, tap water has flouride, which naturally helps keep your teeth clean.

**Brush your teeth every day,** preferably at bedtime. Brushing after every meal is even better.

**Take your time.** Dentists suggest that a thorough brushing should take at least 3 minutes.

**Floss regularly, too.** Use about 18 inches of floss to clean between your teeth. Regular flossing helps improve gum health.

**If possible, visit your dentist regularly for check-ups.** The American Dental Association recommends that you visit your dentist every 6 months. Regular screenings help catch problems early!

**Ask your dentist about free dental care supplies.** Many dentists have extra toothbrushes and toothpaste that they will give you if you ask.



**For more information contact the  
Consumer Health Action Network**

**Call 772-2817 in New Haven  
Or toll-free 1-888-873-4585**