

REDUCE YOUR GROUPS' MEDICAL COSTS WITH PREVENTIVE DENTAL CARE



Employers have an opportunity to improve overall health while reducing the cost of care. CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield (CareFirst) and CareFirst BlueChoice, Inc. (CareFirst BlueChoice) dental plans, including regional traditional, PPO regional and regional DHMO plans, make essential dental care affordable and improve access to care.

Don't think that dental care is important? Think Again!

Proper oral hygiene and regular check-ups can alleviate expensive medical problems. Taking preventive measures and receiving services now will result in better health and substantial medical-cost savings.

- Investigators from the State University of New York at Buffalo found that subjects under 55 with periodontal disease had a 2-4 times greater risk of having a heart attack.²
- Recent studies have shown that diabetic patients with periodontal disease have more difficulty controlling blood glucose levels.³
- A study showed that women who were less than 35 weeks pregnant and received treatment for gum disease had an 84% reduction in premature births.¹

How Does Dental Care Affect Health Care Costs?

- Chronic infection such as periodontal disease produces inflammation which has been implicated as a cause of heart disease, stroke and some cancers.^{5,6}
- Failure to control blood glucose can lead to heart disease, kidney failure, blindness and neurological disorders.
- Premature delivery and low birth weight are associated with infant death and long-term health complications. A March of Dimes study concluded that hospital costs for healthy full-term babies average \$2,830, while costs for a premature baby average \$14,610.⁴

What Can You Do?

- Suggest your clients complete their health care benefits package by including dental benefits.
- Remind your clients that access to dental care will not only improve dental health and appearance but also improve overall health while reducing the cost of health complications from dental diseases.

1 Lopez NJ, et al. Periodontal therapy reduces the rate of preterm low birth weight in women with pregnancy-associated gingivitis. J Periodontol. 2005 Nov;76(11 Suppl):2144-53.
 2 Andriankaia, OM, et al. The use of different measurements and definitions of periodontal disease in the study of the association between periodontal disease and risk of myocardial infarction. J Periodontol 2006 Jun;77(6):1067-73
 3 Faria-Almeida R, Navarro A, Bascones A. Clinical and metabolic changes after conventional treatment of type 2 diabetic patients with chronic periodontitis. J Periodontol. 2006 Apr;77(4):591-8.
 4 Babies born preterm cost businesses big money: Hospital charges estimated at \$7.4 billion annually. March of Dimes News Desk 2005, White Plains, March 28, 2005.
 5 Ridker PM, Rifai N, Rose L, Buring JE, Cook NR. Comparison of C-reactive protein and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol levels in the prediction of first cardiovascular events. N Engl J Med. 2002 Nov 14;347(20):1557-65.
 6 Hussain SP, Hofseth LJ, Harris, CC. Chronic inflammation and cancer: radical causes of cancer. Nature Reviews: Cancer 3:276-285,2003.