

WDS ENROLLEE NEWSLETTER

2006-2007

WESTERN DENTAL NEWS

New Offices Opening in 2006/2007

Western Dental is committed to making dental treatment easy to get in California and Arizona. During 2006, Western Dental opened new dental centers to meet the needs of its California members in the cities of Bakersfield, Cathedral City, Santa Cruz, Indio, Vacaville and Rialto. In Arizona offices were opened in Peoria, Glendale, Phoenix and Tucson. In 2007, Western Dental plans to open dental centers in other California and Arizona cities, with construction started in Chico, Lancaster and San Leandro. Each office will provide dental care as well as orthodontics (braces) to those cities and cities nearby. Information about the new dental centers can be found on the Western Dental website at www.westerndental.com.

Enrollee Satisfaction

Western Dental wants you to be happy with the care you get from your dentist. Choosing the right dentist for your family is a big part of making your dental plan work for you. Western Dental's Member Services staff can help you find an office that is easy for you to get to and that is open at the times you can be there. If you need help in a language other than English, you can ask for help from the dental office staff or by calling Member Services.

You should be treated with dignity and respect by the staff at the dentist's office. Western Dental expects each staff member who serves you to respect your religious and cultural needs. Please let Member Services know if you think you have been treated less than fair by calling (800) 992-3366. You can also ask for a form to file a written grievance. We will listen to you and work hard to make things better.

Western Dental is forming a committee of members and their families to find ways to improve services. If you would like to take part in this committee, call Member Services. Members of this committee do not need to speak English. The committee will be a way for people in all communities to help Western Dental develop services that are right for all members.

PREVENTING CAVITIES STARTS AT BIRTH

If you have children, mainly young children, grandchildren, or if you are planning to have children, then this information is for you. Dental decay is 100% preventable for most children, yet it remains among the most common of all childhood problems, affecting many children by their second birthday.

Dental researchers and pediatric dental specialists (dentists for young children) describe dental decay as a bacterial disease that is passed to the child as an infant, most often from parents, other family members or other care-givers. Once infected with decay-causing bacteria, the child can get tooth decay each time there is a change in the mouth that allows decay causing factors to become stronger than the preventive factors.

But a slight change in favor of preventive factors can slow, stop and, in some cases where the decay is very small, can even reverse the decay process. To help you and your family prevent dental decay and have nicer, more healthy smiles, you should follow the guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry:

- Reduce the number of harmful decay-causing bacteria in your mouth: brush/floss as directed, have all dental "cavities" treated, visit your dentist and have a dentist clean your teeth at least twice each year.
- Reduce habits that can pass harmful decay-causing bacteria to your child: sharing drinks, cups, or foods, tasting/testing your infant's food and using that same spoon to feed the infant.
- Once your child's first tooth/teeth comes in: 1) Clean the tooth/teeth with a soft toothbrush or cloth after feeding, drinking from a cup, or breast feeding; 2) Do not put the child to bed with a bottle (stop by 12-14 months of age); 3) To reduce decay, when appropriate, it is a good idea to stop breast feeding (by 14 months of age); 4) Do not allow your child to carry a "sippy-cup" or bottle with any liquid other than water.
- For older kids: 1) The child should brush twice each day, once just before going to bed, and the child should not eat or drink after brushing; 2) Use a pea-sized dab of toothpaste with fluoride when brushing (4 years old and older); 3) Help the child brush at least once each day up to age nine;

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WESTERN DENTAL SERVICES, INC.

Disclosure of Review Processes

If you ask, Western Dental Services, Inc., (WDS) will send you a copy of the guidelines and criteria that are used to see if a service is covered or not when dentists send requests to WDS for benefits and/or claims for payment. You may ask for this information by writing to

Western Dental Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 14227
Orange, CA 92863

or by calling WDS Member Services at (800) 992-3366. This information will be sent when asked for by a dentist, plan member or a member of the general public.

BRACES ARE FOR ADULTS, TOO

With modern techniques, children, teens and adults can have straight teeth and nice smiles. Orthodontics (braces) isn't just for kids. Your WDS orthodontist can tell you about the many kinds of orthodontic treatments offered, including:

- early treatment for kids ages 7-11;
- pre-teen through adult orthodontic treatment;
- clear and/or gold brackets; and
- Invisalign, using trays that are almost invisible!

It is recommended that children over 7 years old and interested adults have an orthodontic exam. So, to have the pretty smile you always wanted, call WDS Member Services at (800) 992-3366 today.

PREVENTING CAVITIES STARTS AT BIRTH

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4) Limit the number of snacks that have sugar – it is best to eat sugary foods with meals; 5) Lift the child's lip and look at the teeth for plaque (white sticky film) at least one time each month. There are now plaque 'finding' rinses available at grocery, drug and other retail outlets that make it easy to see areas with plaque build-up.

Other options for your child (and the parents/caregivers) that may be of value in keeping decay-free teeth and a healthier smile:

- Fluoride treatments (gels, varnishes and rinses) will help to cut down bacteria and make teeth stronger.
- Drinking water that has fluoride will make children's teeth stronger and make them less likely to decay. Filters and water purifiers remove fluoride, and most water that comes in a bottle does not have fluoride. Check with your water company to be sure that your water has the good amount of fluoride, and buy only bottled waters that have fluoride. In areas with low levels of fluoride in the water, vitamins with fluoride may be prescribed for your children by your dentist.
- Chewing gum with xylitol, a decay-preventing sugar, can reduce harmful bacteria. The gum should be chewed for five minutes, three times a day.
- Sealants (clear coatings) can be put on the biting/chewing surfaces of teeth to help stop harmful bacteria.

Be sure to take your child to the dentist at least twice a year. At your Western Dental Center or WDS Dental Office, you can ask your dentist which of the above are right for you and your child. Together, we can tip the balance and take the bite out of dental decay!

INQUIRIES and COMPLAINTS

Enrollees (members) are encouraged to contact WDS at (800) 992-3366 regarding any concerns that they may have while obtaining services. WDS maintains a grievance process to address these concerns. Enrollee complaints or grievances can be made in person, at any WDS Provider Office, by obtaining a WDS Member Incident Form and submitting it to WDS, or by submitting the complaint using the WDS website at www.westerndental.com. WDS will send notification that the complaint has been received within five calendar days of receiving the complaint, and WDS will send a written response to the concerns within 30 days of receipt of the complaint.

The California Department of Managed Health Care is responsible for regulating health care service plans. If you have a grievance against your Health Plan, you should first telephone your Health Plan at **1-800-992-3366** and use your Health Plan's grievance process before contacting the Department. Utilizing this grievance procedure does not prohibit any potential legal rights or remedies that may be available to you. If you need help with a grievance involving an emergency, a grievance that has not been satisfactorily resolved by your Health Plan, or a grievance that has remained unresolved for more than 30 days, you may call the Department for assistance. You may also be eligible for an Independent Medical Review (IMR). If you are eligible for IMR, the IMR process will provide an impartial review of medical decisions made by a Health Plan related to the medical necessity of a proposed service or treatment, coverage decisions for treatments that are experimental or investigational in nature and payment disputes for emergency or urgent medical services. The Department also has a toll-free telephone number (**1-888-HMO-2219**) and a TDD line (**1-877-688-9891**) for the hearing and speech impaired. The Department's Internet Web site <http://www.hmohelp.ca.gov> has complaint forms, IMR application forms, and instructions online.