



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Delta Dental recommends giving the holiday gift of oral health A toothbrush, dental floss, sugar-free gum are healthy gift ideas

Oak Brook, Ill. (December 3, 2008) – Since the consumption of grandma’s cookies and candies is inevitable and may be hard on everyone’s teeth this holiday season, Delta Dental Plans Association recommends stuffing your loved ones’ stocking with gifts that combat tooth decay – like a toothbrush, dental floss and sugar-free gum.

“Long-term, eating foods that are high in sugar, without proper oral care, could result in tooth decay and cavities,” says Max Anderson, DDS, a national oral health advisor for Delta Dental Plans Association. “Give a gift that will keep healthy teeth and gums top-of-mind during the holidays.”

If not removed by brushing or other means, sugars in the mouth can contribute to tooth decay. Naturally occurring bacteria in the mouth form a colorless, sticky film called plaque. Cavity-causing organisms within plaque feed on sugar and turn it into acid, which attacks tooth enamel and leads to tooth decay.

“But proper brushing, flossing and chewing sugar-free gum are easy ways to fight tooth decay,” says Anderson.

That’s why Delta Dental recommends the following stocking stuffers to promote oral health this holiday season.

A Toothbrush - Brushing your teeth with fluoride toothpaste is an effective strategy. Removing plaque left by holiday sweets at least twice per day will help prevent tooth decay and gum disease. An alternative to the conventional toothbrush is the electric toothbrush, which some argue, is more effective at removing plaque. Electric toothbrushes come with vibrating, oscillating or sonic brush heads, and the basic models are relatively inexpensive.

Besides brush type, you also have a choice of bristle type. Hard bristle toothbrushes were once

recommended but have been shown to be too abrasive to the teeth and gums. Give a toothbrush with a soft, rounded-end nylon bristle brush.

Dental Floss - While a toothbrush is effective in cleaning tooth surfaces, the bristles cannot adequately clean between the teeth. Dental floss will help remove holiday fare from these hard-to-reach areas.

There are many types of dental floss to choose from – unwaxed or waxed, flavored or unflavored and regular or wide. Waxed floss may be easier to slide through tight teeth or restoration contacts, while unwaxed floss will spread out its fibers during use for greater tooth contact. Give holiday-flavored floss – like cinnamon.

Sugar-Free Gum - Many studies have shown that chewing sugar-free gum after meals and snacks, especially when brushing at those times is impractical, helps reduce the acid level in the mouth which has a potentially detrimental effect on tooth enamel.

Give gum that includes xylitol, an artificial sweetener believed to reduce the incidence of cavities.

The not-for-profit Delta Dental Plans Association (www.deltadental.com) based in Oak Brook, Ill., is the leading national network of independent dental service corporations specializing in providing dental benefits programs to 51 million Americans in more than 93,000 employee groups throughout the country.

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