



# HEALTH MATTERS

A PUBLICATION FOR TRICARE® BENEFICIARIES

## Protect Your Teeth From Acids in Foods And Drinks

We all know a great oral health care routine includes brushing twice a day, flossing, and seeing your dentist for routine exams and cleanings. But did you know that limiting acidic foods and drinks is another thing you can do to protect your teeth? Read more to find out how to protect your teeth from acidic foods and drinks.

### What's the problem with acidic foods and drinks?

Sugar gets a bad rap and for good reason, but foods with acids are also problematic for our dental health. The acids found in our foods and drinks erode your teeth's enamel. The enamel is the outer covering of your tooth. This erosion causes your tooth to be exposed, which allows cavity-producing bacteria easier access.

Watch out for these three types of food and drink:

- Citrus and citrus flavoring
- Carbonated drinks
- Sour tasting candies

### Tips to protect your teeth from acidic erosion

- Limit your intake of acidic foods and drinks.
- Eat acidic foods, like tomatoes and oranges, with a meal. The saliva produced during a large meal helps keep acids at bay.
- Avoid carbonated drinks like soda. But when you do drink them, swallow right away, and don't hold the liquid in your mouth. Drinking carbonated drinks with a straw can also help protect your teeth.
- Rinse your mouth with water after consuming acidic foods and drinks.
- Brush your teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.
- See your dentist regularly for routine examinations and cleanings.

Tooth erosion is irreversible, so by following these tips, you can help protect your teeth from damage from acidic foods and drinks. ★



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### ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

#### Celebrating Your Child's First Birthday With TDP Coverage

We'll help you understand the ins and outs of enrolling a new child and the ways it can affect your plan. See page 2.

#### Have You Fallen for These 4 Common Oral Health Care Myths?

Don't let these myths affect how you care for your teeth and gums. See page 3.

#### The TDP for Enrollees With Chronic Conditions

Learn how you can get additional TDP benefits if you have oral health conditions like gum disease. See page 6.

# Celebrating Your Child's First Birthday With TDP Coverage

Your child's first birthday is a big milestone! The TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) automatically enrolls children of enrollees\* for dental coverage on the first day of the month after their first birthday, unless National Guard and Reserve enrollees are enrolled in a sponsor-only plan.

For example, if your child was born Sept. 13, they'll be enrolled in the TDP starting Oct. 1 after their first birthday.

It's important to register your child in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) and to keep your information in DEERS up to date. This ensures your child can get TDP coverage.

## Transitioning from a single plan to a family plan

Your child's coverage could affect your monthly premium. Your premium depends on your sponsor's military status and how many of your family members are enrolled.

If you had a single plan before your child turned 1, your premium will increase from the single plan rate to the family plan rate. However, if you already had a family plan, this child's enrollment won't increase your costs. Want to learn more about TDP premiums? Visit [www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com). Then click "Benefits" to see your dental costs.



## Enrolling your child in the TDP before age 1

Many children have several teeth before their first birthday. Even though your child's TDP coverage automatically starts at age 1, you can still choose to enroll them in the TDP at any time. If your current plan is for a single family member only, your premium will change from the single plan rate to the family plan rate. You can easily enroll your child online before their first birthday through milConnect. You can also contact United Concordia to enroll them by calling 844-653-4061 or visiting [www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com) and clicking "Enroll."

## TDP benefit

It's important for your child to develop good oral health care habits. The TDP covers two routine exams and routine teeth cleanings in a consecutive 12-month period. Want to stay up to date on the latest healthy habits? Visit [www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com) and click "Dental Health Center." ★

*\*Note: National Guard and Reserve members enrolled in a sponsor-only plan must enroll their child in TDP to get dental coverage.*



## Have You Fallen for These 4 Common Oral Health Care Myths?

There are many common myths when it comes to caring for our teeth. It's easy to accept well-meaning advice from loved ones, especially when many myths are passed around so often. Unfortunately, these rumors can lead people to make poor decisions when it comes to their dental health. Read on and see if you've fallen for any of these oral health care myths and learn what to do instead.

**Myth: Brushing teeth harder means you're getting them cleaner.**

**Fact:** It may seem like brushing your teeth harder will lead to a cleaner mouth, but the truth is that brushing your teeth hard may damage your teeth and gums. Hard brushing could cause tooth sensitivity by stripping away your enamel, the outer covering of your tooth, and cause your gums to recede. For the cleanest teeth, use a soft-bristled toothbrush and make gentle motions whenever you brush.

**Myth: Baby teeth aren't as important as adult teeth.**

**Fact:** It's true that baby teeth are technically temporary, but they're far more important than most people give them credit for. Baby teeth perform essential functions. They're crucial for proper speech development and jaw development. If baby teeth are lost too early to cavities, this empty space could hinder the development of adult teeth, causing alignment issues. Bacteria from cavities could also affect adult teeth. Make sure your child brushes twice a day and flosses to prevent any potential issues for when their adult teeth come in.

**Myth: Rinse your mouth immediately after brushing.**

**Fact:** Do you rinse your mouth with water immediately after brushing your teeth? You're not alone. But rinsing your mouth out with water to get rid of toothpaste isn't helpful after all. Fluoride toothpaste protects your teeth for a while after you've brushed them. For the best results, rinse your mouth out after brushing your teeth with a fluoride mouth wash. Wait 30 minutes before you rinse your mouth out or before you drink to get the most out of your toothpaste and protect your teeth longer.

**Myth: Flossing isn't as important as brushing.**

**Fact:** Everyone knows you need to brush your teeth twice a day, but did you know that flossing is just as important as brushing? If you aren't flossing once a day, you're missing out on key areas of your teeth. Cavities between the teeth are extremely common. Make sure you're flossing at least once a day to keep all parts of your teeth as healthy as possible.

For more tips on oral health and for more dental health information, visit the Dental Health Center on the TDP website. ★







## What You Need To Know About Your TDP Benefits During a Military Move

The day is finally here: Your active duty service member (ADSM) has just gotten their permanent change of station (PCS) orders. Changing duty stations can make anyone nervous. After all, a move often comes with a long to-do list. If you're wondering about what happens to your TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) benefits during a move, this article will tell you what you need to know.

### TDP benefits wherever you are

Making sure you receive your TDP benefits is simple. There are a few things you need to know when you move to a different duty station, whether you're moving within the continental United States (CONUS) or to a location outside of the continental United States (OCONUS).

**1. Update DEERS.** Make sure you update Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) with your new address to ensure you receive your TDP benefits.

- Update your address online at <https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil>.

Or

- Make changes to your DEERS information by phone or in person at the nearest ID Card Office.

You can find out more information on how to update DEERS by visiting [www.tricare.mil/deers](http://www.tricare.mil/deers).

**2. Review My Account.** *My Account* is an online tool available 24/7, which allows you to access, review, and manage your TDP account online. Your address and email will automatically update in *My Account* when you update DEERS. However, you'll need to make any phone number changes directly in *My Account* so you don't miss any important updates about your coverage. You can also download your dental history to take to your new dentist so they have an accurate account of your oral health.

There's no need to create an account. Log in to My Account at [www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com) and enter your DS Logon.

**3. Find A Dentist.** Finding a TDP dentist is easy with the CONUS *Find A Dentist* tool. As a TDP enrollee, you may visit any dentist. However, only TDP network dentists have agreed to United Concordia's allowance, so a non-network dentist may cost you more out-of-pocket.

There's also a *Find A Dentist* tool for enrollees living OCONUS, which provides a list of TRICARE Overseas Preferred Dentists (TOPDs). As a TDP enrollee living OCONUS, you don't have to seek care with a TOPD. You have the option to find a dental provider on your own and receive care in any OCONUS location. ★



## Silver Diamine Fluoride: A Safe and Effective Treatment for Cavities

If you've ever had a cavity, you may be familiar with fillings. However, sometimes if a young child or a person with disabilities gets a cavity, it may be very hard to get them to relax for a dentist to take care of these cavities without first putting them to sleep. Here's where silver diamine fluoride (SDF) comes in and saves the day. Read more to see if SDF is right for your family.

### What is SDF?

SDF is a liquid painted directly onto the tooth that dentists use to prevent, slow down, or stop cavities in the teeth of children and people with disabilities who can't tolerate traditional fillings. Applying SDF is easy and painless, and it's perfect for patients afraid of getting work done at the dentist. SDF can be put on teeth as soon as tooth decay is detected.

**Note:** Applying SDF to a cavity will turn the area that has tooth decay a black or dark grey color. This is permanent. SDF won't turn a tooth without decay a different color.

### TDP benefit

The TDP covers SDF for children ages 18 and under every 36 months. For a complete list of benefits, visit *My Account* or review them in the *TDP Handbook Supplement*

If you're concerned about your child's oral health, talk to your dentist about SDF. It may be a good option for your family member. ★



## Have You Signed Up for the Exceptional Family Member Program?

The Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) provides additional dental benefits to military families who have dependents with disabilities.

The EFMP can coordinate assignments to support families by making sure special medical needs are considered when it comes time to be assigned to a duty station. The TDP also supports members with qualifying conditions through longer coverage and comfort measures for dental procedures.

Want to learn more? Talk to your Service point of contact or call Military OneSource at 800-342-9647. ★



## The TDP for Enrollees With Chronic Conditions

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Do you or a family member have a chronic health condition? The TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) may have extra benefits for you. There are a few ways the TDP makes sure you get what you need to keep your mouth healthy. Keep reading to find out how you can make the features of the TDP work best for you.

### The TDP Wellness Program

The TDP Wellness Program provides additional dental benefits for enrollees with certain chronic health conditions. These dental benefits are at no cost to you and focus on getting you the proper treatment and maintenance for gum disease.

### Confirm and activate your coverage

To receive this enhanced coverage, you (or anyone on your dental plan) must report the covered condition via *My Account*. You can register to use the TDP Wellness Program any time after your TDP effective date of coverage. Here's how:

1. Click the red “Log in to My Account” button at the top of the TDP website at [www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com). Log in using your DS Logon.
2. Click “Manage My Wellness.”
3. Add your medical condition.

Once registered, talk to your dentist about your medical condition and your additional coverage through TDP. You may or may not need the extra services that are available, but your dentist can recommend additional procedures, if necessary.

Visit the TDP website, click on “Benefits” and click “What’s Covered” for more information on the TDP Wellness Program. ★





## Protecting Your Oral Health When You Have Piercings

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Piercings located in the tongue, lips, and mouth are popular ways to express personal style. How can you protect your oral health if you have these piercings? Here are a few things to consider.

### What are the risks of oral piercings?

Although piercings in the tongue, lip, and lip frenulum are common, there are several risks associated with them.

Here are some known risks of oral piercings:

- **Chipped or damaged teeth.** It's possible to crack or chip your tooth by accidentally biting down on a metal piercing. Piercings can also wear at your enamel, the outer covering of your teeth, by repeatedly rubbing against it. It's estimated that over 25% of people with a tongue piercing will experience tooth damage.
- **Gum recession.** Oral piercings rub against the gums, which causes gums to recede by wearing away or pulling back from the teeth. This causes exposed tooth roots, which can cause tooth decay. Approximately half of people with lip piercings will experience gum recession.
- **Infection.** The mouth harbors a ton of bacteria, which makes piercings susceptible to infection. Studies have shown oral piercings to potentially cause severe infections of the head, neck, and even the heart.

### Tips to protect your oral health if you have piercings

Here are some tips to keep your oral piercings as healthy as possible:

- **Choose the right jewelry.** Jewelry made from synthetic materials, like plastic, is the best choice. Steel and titanium jewelry are known to harbor more bacteria. After your piercing has healed, choose a shorter piece to prevent rubbing. This short piece of jewelry will minimize the irritation and damage to the soft tissues of your mouth.
- **Keep up with your oral health.** Visit your dentist twice a year for routine exams and cleanings. Don't forget to keep up with your daily brushing and flossing. It may also help to rinse with an alcohol-free mouthwash.
- **Leave it alone.** Refrain from touching your piercing with your hands or playing with the piercing with your mouth. This will limit the number of bacteria that enter the piercing, which could cause an infection.

If you're considering getting an oral piercing, be sure to talk to your dentist first. They can help you understand the risks involved and make sure that you're taking the necessary steps to protect your oral health. ★



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## CHECK THIS OUT...

### How To Pay Your TRICARE Dental Program Premiums Online

If you're a "direct bill" TDP enrollee who pays your monthly premium after receiving an email or paper monthly invoice, learn more about how you can manage your payments online.



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## How To Get a DS Logon

Getting a DS Logon is quick and easy. Just follow these simple steps:

1. Go to **www.uccitdp.com** and select "Log in to My Account."
2. Select "Create New Account."
3. Select the appropriate documentation you'd like to use to verify your identity (CAC with access to card reader, Email registration with a valid DEERs email address, or Remote Identity Proofing if you do not have a valid DoD ID or CAC).

When you have your DS Logon, you're ready to log in to access to the unique features in *My Account*. ★



### TRICARE DENTAL PROGRAM RESOURCES

[www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com)

#### ENROLLMENT AND BILLING SERVICES

1-844-653-4061 (CONUS)

1-844-653-4060 (OCONUS)

1-717-888-7400 (OCONUS)

711 (TDD/TTY)

#### CLAIMS FILING

CONUS:  
 United Concordia  
 TRICARE Dental Program  
 P.O. Box 69451  
 Harrisburg, PA 17106

OCONUS:  
 United Concordia  
 TRICARE Dental Program  
 P.O. Box 69452  
 Harrisburg, PA 17106

#### BENEFICIARY WEB ENROLLMENT

<https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil>