

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Survey: Colorado Kids Need Brushing Up on Oral Health Habits

DENVER – Hear that drill sound? Have you taken your child to the dentist lately? More than a quarter of Colorado parents reported their child had a cavity filled last year, according to a survey released today by Delta Dental of Colorado in conjunction with National Children’s Oral Health Month.

According to the 2013 Delta Dental Children’s Oral Health Survey, which includes national and Colorado-specific data, one in four kids nationally had a cavity filled in the past year, and 53 percent of those who did had two or more cavities. This is surprising news, given that cavities are nearly 100 percent preventable.

The survey shows that American children need to brush up on some dental health habits, including the basics of brushing and flossing.

“Parents and caregivers need to teach good oral health habits to children at a young age to help prevent cavities,” said Dr. Michael Okuji, DDS, dental director for Delta Dental of Colorado.

The survey found that, similar to national trends, brushing and flossing habits of Colorado children fall short of dentist recommendations:

- About four in 10 Colorado children brush less than the recommended two times a day.
- Four in 10 brush for less than 2 minutes.
- Only two in 10 floss daily, and four in 10 of Colorado children never floss.

These are some of the oral health habits that fall short of what’s recommended by dental professionals:

- **Survey shows:** Only 58 percent of American children had their teeth brushed twice a day and 34 percent of children brush for less than two minutes. About four in ten Colorado children brush less than the recommended two times per day.
- **Delta Dental recommends:** Children’s teeth should be brushed twice a day for at least two minutes each time. Parents should assist with this task until the kids are about 6 years old.
- **Survey shows:** Forty-three percent of parents or caregivers report that their children’s teeth are never flossed, and of children whose teeth are flossed, only 23 percent are flossed daily. In Colorado, only two in ten kids floss daily, and four in ten never floss their teeth.
- **Delta Dental recommends:** Once any two teeth are touching, caregivers should floss, or help the child floss, once a day.

About Delta Dental of Colorado

Delta Dental of Colorado's mission is to improve the oral health of the communities it serves. Established in 1958, Delta Dental of Colorado is the largest, most experienced dental benefits company in the state. It is a nonprofit organization that serves nearly 1 million Coloradans with high-quality, cost-effective, evidence-based dental plans. For more about Delta Dental of Colorado visit www.DeltaDentalCO.com.

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¹ *Morpace Inc. conducted the 2013 Delta Dental Children's Oral Health Survey. Interviews were conducted nationally via the Internet with 926 primary caregivers of children from birth to age 11. For results based on the total sample of national adults, the margin of error is ± 3.2 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.*