



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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June is National Smile Month

Survey shows Colorado children need to brush, floss more often

DENVER (April X, 2012) – June is National Smile Month, and a great time to get back to the basics of oral health care and teach kids the best ways to keep their teeth healthy – by brushing twice a day and flossing once a day.

According to a survey by Delta Dental of Colorado,¹ poor brushing and not enough brushing may be the major obstacles keeping children from having excellent oral health and are the areas that cause Colorado caregivers the greatest concern.

While nearly two in five Coloradans (37 percent) report that their child’s overall oral health is excellent, nearly two in five of the survey respondents (38 percent) admit their child brushes his or her teeth less than twice a day. And three in five (60 percent) say their child brushes his or her teeth for at least two minutes, which is the amount of time dentists typically recommend spending on each brushing.

Another 8 percent of survey respondents believe that the biggest obstacles to their child’s good oral health are poor flossing and not enough flossing. While the American Association of Pediatric Dentistry recommends flossing daily, nearly two in five Coloradans (36 percent) whose children have teeth say they have never been flossed; only 21 percent report their child’s teeth are flossed daily.

Make Brushing Fun

Getting children to brush regularly, and correctly, can be a real challenge. Here are some easy ideas from Delta Dental of Colorado to encourage brushing:

- **Trade places:** Tired of prying your way in whenever it's time to brush those little teeth? Why not reverse roles and let the child brush your teeth? It's fun for them
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and shows them the right way to brush. Just remember, do not share a toothbrush. According to the American Dental Association, sharing a toothbrush may result in an exchange of microorganisms and an increased risk of infections.

- **Take turns:** Set a timer and have the child brush his or her teeth for 30 seconds. Then you brush their teeth for 30 seconds. Repeat this at least twice.
- **Call in reinforcements:** If children stubbornly neglect to brush or floss, maybe it's time to change the messenger. Call the dental office before the next checkup and let them know what's going on. The same motivational message might be heeded if it comes from a third party, especially the dentist.

“Colorado caregivers say they understand that proper brushing techniques are critical to children’s oral health,” said Elizabeth Shick, DDS, MPH, assistant professor of pediatric dentistry at Children’s Hospital Colorado & University of Colorado School of Dental Medicine. “But there’s clearly a need for more frequent and better education, to teach practices that will ensure lifelong oral health. And, since people overwhelmingly prefer the dentist as their primary information source, dental benefits that encourage visits to the dentist are crucial.”

Visit www.MonthlyMouthfulCO.com for more tips to help teach kids proper oral health care.

About Delta Dental of Colorado

Delta Dental of Colorado is the largest and most experienced provider of dental benefits in the state. As a not-for-profit, Delta Dental of Colorado invests in oral health projects through the Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation that focus on access to care, prevention, education and research. The Colorado company is a member of the Delta Dental Plans Association, a national organization of not-for-profit Delta Dental plans. The national association is the largest dental benefits carrier in the nation providing coverage to more than 56 million people in nearly 95,700 employer groups.

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¹ *Morpace Inc. conducted the 2011 Delta Dental Children’s Oral Health Survey. Interviews were conducted by email statewide with 150 primary caregivers of children from birth to age 11. For results based on the total sample of Colorado adults, the margin of error is ±8 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.*