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Cavity Prevention

Here are a few simple steps that can be taken to prevent a cavity from forming in the beginning.

New Year: Re-New Priorities

With the start of the new year, comes the start of a new Legislative Session. The [Oral Health Kansas public policy priorities](#) for 2012 have been set. Several factors were considered when developing the priorities for the coming year:

- Only 65.1% of Kansas residents have access to fluoridated community water. ¹
- At least 57,000 Kansans live in areas where the closest dental office is at least 30 minutes away. ²
- More than 17,000 Kansans visit an emergency room each year with dental pain. ³
- 181,853 adults are on the Kansas Medicaid program, but have no dental coverage. ⁴
- In the last school year nearly nineteen percent of K-12 students in the state's two largest counties had untreated dental decay. ⁵

While Kansas has developed a much deeper oral health infrastructure over the past decade, there are many milestones yet to be achieved. Poor and underserved adults and children fundamentally lack access to quality, affordable oral health care. They struggle to get access to dental providers and funding to pay for dental services. Many underserved people also lack the oral health literacy necessary to place a high value on obtaining and maintaining good oral health.

Oral Health Kansas believes access to oral health is of utmost important for all Kansans, but we believe "access" is not just one thing. Oral health access is akin to a three-legged stool. The

- * Brush your teeth with a toothpaste containing fluoride at least twice a day.
- * Gently brush your gums with a soft toothbrush to keep them healthy.
- * Floss your teeth at least once a day to remove plaque and food that could be caught between the teeth.
- * Limit the amount of soda and sugary treats you eat and sugary drinks you drink. If you need to drink sugary drinks, it is best to brush afterwards. If you are unable to brush, rinse your mouth out with water, and always remember sipping on sugary drinks causes decay quicker than just drinking the entire sugary beverage, as your teeth are constantly being coated with sugar.
- * Be sure to visit your dentist every six months

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three legs are access to a provider, access to a payment source, and willingness to access services. Our public policy priorities are designed to build all three legs of the access stool as well as improve overall public oral health. The priorities our Board of Directors set depend on strong partnerships with many other organizations in the state that also are dedicated to improving the health of Kansans. We look forward to working with our partners this year to advance a strong [oral health agenda](#).

It's Never Too Late to Correct Oral Health

From Delta Dental of Kansas

It can be difficult to keep up with good oral health habits in your busy, fast-paced life. Time, bad eating habits, health problems, not visiting the dentist and an inconsistent brushing and flossing routine can all take their toll on your smile. Fortunately, it's never too late to start a good oral health regimen and repair or treat past damage caused by decay.

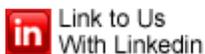
Many times if your dentist catches a cavity early enough, it is possible to re-mineralize the weakened parts of your enamel so that it does not become a full-blown cavity requiring a filling. This can be done with toothpastes, rinses and other products that contain fluoride, calcium and phosphate. Increasing saliva flow by chewing sugar-free gum will also help the re-mineralization process.

If you have a cavity that has not reached to the inner most part of the tooth, fillings are the most effective way to stabilize and save the tooth. There are a variety of filling options for you and your dentist to discuss, depending on the size and location of the cavity as well as durability and cost of the filling.

Remember, keeping your mouth healthy should be an integral part of your daily routine. Your oral health plays an essential role in helping keep your whole body in tip-top shape and should not be over-looked amidst your busy schedule. Be sure to set aside time every day for brushing and flossing and schedule regular visits to the dentist.

To read this article and more from Delta Dental of Kansas
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If you have an idea, story or suggestion for a Oral Health Kansas Weekly Wednesday Update please send an email to jparnell@oralhealthkansas.org



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