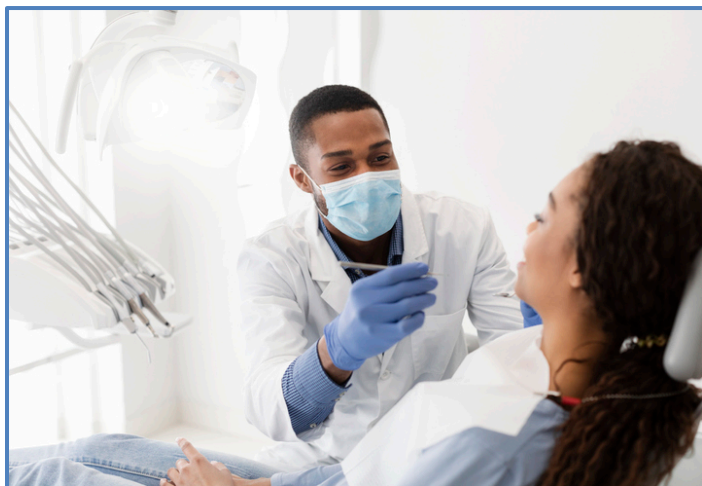


Support employees' oral health and early prevention

If your company offers a dental plan to employees, it's important to encourage them to use their dental benefits. When you offer dental care, you offer more than just the ability to eat well. Healthy gums and teeth are vital to overall well-being.

Taking care of our teeth helps ensure social satisfaction, eating, playing and being part of a greater community. Without teeth or if in pain, people tend to isolate themselves and withdraw from society, robbing them of social interaction we all need. With preventive oral health, we reduce our risks of bone loss (periodontal disease), infection and pain. In addition, we're learning more about the connections between oral health and systemic



health. Uncontrolled diabetes, for example, can lead to bone loss around teeth and premature tooth loss. Poor oral health may also be related to heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, low birth weight and premature deliveries.

Early dental care is important. Parents are very concerned about their kids' health, from preventing cavities and establishing early habits to orthodontics and straight teeth. This is an important part of children's health. Parents may not have received ideal care as children, so they want their kids to have better dental treatment. Encourage your employees to start early intervention with their children's

dental providers through knee-to-knee exams and first dental visits at age 1. But let parents know that it's never too late to get their child started on the road to good oral health.

Individuals can prevent dental disease by eating well and removing plaque and bacteria through regular brushing, flossing and dental visits. But even with good oral care, people can still get cavities or have periodontal disease, and systemic health issues may trump best dental practices. There will always be a need for professional dental care.

Employers can play a role in encouraging good oral health and early prevention. If you create a culture where it's advisable for employees to take time to get their teeth cleaned or take care of other preventive health issues, then employees are more likely to take care of themselves.

Sources: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)*, [ada.org](https://www.ada.org)*

*Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network don't own or control this website.