Mouth Health Plays a Key Role in Your General Health

Why is a healthy mouth important?

Healthcare for your teeth, gums and the lining of your mouth, known as Oral Health, is important to prevent mouth and facial pain, sores, infections and other diseases in your mouth that can affect biting, chewing, smiling and speaking. In addition, inflammation in your mouth has been linked to heart disease, arterial blockage, stroke, pneumonia and infections throughout your body.

What if I am afraid or do not like the dentist’s office?

First, know that you are not alone. People put off going to the dentist too often for a variety of reasons, such as you might be worried it will hurt or the office may have some strange equipment, sounds and smells. Or maybe you just haven’t gone in a while and you are worried about what the dentist might say. So, what can you do?

1. Speak up and talk to your dentist about your fears or anxiety.

2. You may need to think about a desensitization visit prior to having oral care. That means a visit to the dentist’s office to meet your doctor, see the equipment and talk about what will happen on the day of the visit for care. This is a great option if you are very nervous. Ask your PHP Care Team for more information today about desensitization. Your Care Team can also help connect you with a dentist in your area and help with scheduling this service, new and routine appointments and transportation.

Why should I go to the dentist if I do not have any problems with my teeth?

Going to the dentist for a once-a-year checkup is important. The dentist may give you new advice on how to continue to prevent mouth issues, advice related to how medication changes may affect your mouth health or how a new medical diagnosis such as Diabetes may affect your mouth care. At an annual visit the dentist may spot a new problem and with early treatment prevent it from becoming a big problem.
Mouth Health Plays a Key Role in Your General Health

What should I be doing to look after my oral health?

There are many things you can do to look after your oral health!

- **Brush your teeth**! You should brush your teeth at least twice a day for at least 2 minutes at a time.
- **Floss your teeth** once a day.
- **Get a new toothbrush** every 3-4 months.
- **Go to the dentist at least once a year** or more often if recommended by the dentist.
- **Use mouthwash if recommended** by your dentist as part of your daily oral care routine.

Where can I get more information?

The American Dental Association has lots of great tips for looking after your oral health. Learn more at: [www.ada.org/en](http://www.ada.org/en). The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research also provides I/DD specific resources and information: [www.nidcr.nih.gov/health-info/developmental-disabilities/more-info](http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/health-info/developmental-disabilities/more-info).

**PHP Care Complete FIDA-IDD (Medicare - Medicaid Plan)**

The State of New York has created a Participant Ombudsman Program called the Independent Consumer Advocacy Network (ICAN) to provide participants free, confidential assistance on any services offered by Partners Health Plan. ICAN may be reached toll-free at 1-844-614-8800 (TTY users call 711, then follow the prompts to dial 844-614-8800) or online at icannys.org.

Partners Health Plan is a managed care plan that contracts with Medicare and the New York State Department of Health (Medicaid) to provide benefits to Participants through the Fully Integrated Duals Advantage for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (FIDA-IDD) Demonstration.