

The Dentist Is In ... Expecting Moms, Brush Up on Oral Care



*Lt Col Kathleen A. Gates
Deputy Chief, Dental Care Branch
TRICARE Management Activity*

Did you know that pregnant women are more susceptible to oral infections during pregnancy? Studies from the American Dental Association® and the American Academy of Periodontology show that

pregnant women with periodontal disease are seven times more likely to experience preterm births or deliver babies with a low birth weight. Normal hormonal changes during pregnancy make pregnant women more sensitive to the bacteria found throughout the mouth. Any infection, including oral infections, affecting the mother can also affect the fetus.

Visiting your dentist for regular exams and cleanings is a good way to keep your mouth healthy and clean. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends additional preventive oral care for pregnant women. The TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) covers three routine dental cleanings in a consecutive 12-month period for pregnant women.

Gum disease and other oral health issues can be prevented with careful and thorough home care and by scheduling routine visits with a dentist. If you are planning to become pregnant, the CDC recommends you schedule a checkup and any necessary preventive or treatment-related care ahead of time.

If you are already pregnant, talk with your dentist so you can get dental care tailored to your needs to prevent complications during your pregnancy.

Expecting mothers should limit their intake of sugary foods and drinks. Bacteria metabolize sugar and create a film on teeth called plaque. The bacteria in the plaque can cause gum disease and tooth decay. Brushing and flossing after meals can eliminate food debris in the mouth to help prevent bacteria buildup. If brushing and flossing after eating is not an option, rinse your mouth with water or chew sugarless gum for a few minutes to remove food debris until you can brush and floss your teeth.

Preventing oral health problems is easy and important for expecting mothers. The TDP provides comprehensive oral health care coverage to make sure you get the recommended care you need as a mom-to-be to stay healthy throughout your pregnancy. For more information about TDP coverage and benefits during your pregnancy, visit www.mybenefits.metlife.com/tricare. ■

Inside This Issue ...

- Understanding Dental Anesthesia Options
- Dental Sealants Help Prevent Cavities
- Find the TRICARE Dental Program on Facebook
- Replace a Missing Tooth with an Implant
- Thumbsucking, Pacifier Use and Oral Health
- Frequently Asked Questions
- TRICARE Kids' Dental Health Fun Page
- Provider Education: A Key Part of a Quality Dental Plan



An Important Note about TRICARE Program Information: At the time of printing, this information is current. It is important to remember that TRICARE policies and benefits are governed by public law and federal regulations. Changes to TRICARE programs are continually made as public law and/or federal regulations are amended. **Military treatment facility guidelines and policies may be different than those outlined in this publication.** For the most recent information, contact your TRICARE regional contractor, TRICARE Service Center, or local military treatment facility.

Understanding Dental Anesthesia Options

Dental anesthesia can reduce discomfort during dental treatment. The TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) offers several options to help you feel more comfortable during your dental procedures including local and general anesthesia.

Anesthesia Types

Local anesthesia is administered to a small area of the soft tissue of the mouth and comes in two forms: topical and injectable.

Topical anesthesia is applied to help prevent pain on the oral tissue of the mouth. Your dentist may use a topical anesthetic to numb an area in your mouth before injecting a local anesthetic. Topical anesthetics can also be used to soothe painful mouth sores such as canker sores.

Injectable local anesthesia prevents discomfort in specific areas of your mouth during dental treatment by blocking nerve sensation and numbing the mouth tissues. This type of anesthesia is commonly used in most dental procedures.

General anesthesia is used to completely block pain sensation associated with more complex treatments. General anesthesia puts you in a controlled state of unconsciousness or “deep sleep.”

The dentist or other health care professional delivering the general anesthesia must be licensed to provide the anesthesia in the state where the service is being provided. General anesthesia is covered under the TDP with a 50 percent cost-share and may be covered by your TRICARE medical benefit under very limited circumstances.



The TRICARE medical benefit may cover general anesthesia services for dental treatment provided to beneficiaries with developmental, mental or physical disabilities, along with children age 5 and under. Under this benefit, reimbursement for general anesthesia is based on your TRICARE medical program (e.g., TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Standard). To limit out-of-pocket costs, contact your TRICARE regional contractor at the following toll-free numbers for benefit information before seeking these services. For more information on covered services, visit www.tricare.mil/coveredservices. ■

TRICARE North Region	TRICARE South Region	TRICARE West Region
Health Net Federal Services, LLC 1-877-TRICARE (1-877-874-2273) www.hnfs.com	Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc. 1-800-444-5445 Humana-Military.com	TriWest Healthcare Alliance 1-888-TRIWEST (1-888-874-9378) www.triwest.com

Dental Sealants Help Prevent Cavities

A dental sealant is a plastic material that is applied to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth, or molars, to prevent cavities. The plastic material acts as a barrier so cavity-causing bacteria cannot enter the pits and grooves in the chewing surfaces of the teeth.

Putting Sealants in Place

Sealants are quick and easy to apply. The dentist cleans and prepares the teeth with a solution to make the plastic stick. The plastic is then painted on the teeth where it hardens.

Benefits of Sealants

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 90 percent of children's cavities occur in teeth that have pits and grooves. Two-thirds of those cavities occur on the chewing

surfaces. Research shows that dental sealants prevent cavities on teeth with pits and grooves. It is recommended that dental sealants be placed on the permanent molar teeth of children shortly after the molars erupt. The first permanent molars erupt in children around age 6, with the second set of permanent molars appearing around age 12.

Sealant Coverage

Sealants placed on permanent molars are covered under the TRICARE Dental Program through age 18. The teeth must be cavity-free with no previous restoration. One sealant per tooth is covered in a three-year period. Sealants for teeth other than permanent molars are not covered. The cost-share for covered sealants is 20 percent. Command-sponsored beneficiaries living in an OCONUS area do not have cost-shares for this service. ■

Find the TRICARE Dental Program on Facebook

With the launch of MetLife's TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) page on Facebook, you now have a new way to learn about your dental benefit through other beneficiaries and community members. MetLife's TDP page features updates about the benefit, including claims, enrollment, general inquiries and other information.

Join the community to learn what other TDP beneficiaries are saying. By joining, you can view posts on topics such as orthodontic coverage, dental hygiene, coverage for children, Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) updates and other important information.

As an enrollee, feel free to post general questions about your TDP coverage at any time. The MetLife team usually responds within two hours of a post from 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. ET. If a post is made on the weekend, the MetLife team usually replies within five hours from 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. ET.

MetLife welcomes your comments, photos and videos.

To participate on the Facebook page, please follow these simple guidelines:

- Please keep commentary on-topic and appropriate for all audiences. Any postings that are considered obscene, intended to harass, abuse, threaten others or infringe on another's rights will be removed from the site.
- For your security, please do not post any personal information, such as your policy number.

To access the page, visit www.facebook.com/MetLifeTDP. For customer service, call 1-855-MET-TDP1 (1-855-638-8371) (CONUS) or 1-855-MET-TDP2 (1-855-638-8372) (OCONUS) to get help right away. ■

Replace a Missing Tooth with an Implant

One of the best ways to replace a missing tooth is with a dental implant. However, it is important to fully understand the procedure and your TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) coverage before you start the process.

Dental implants are a time-tested option for replacing missing teeth and, according to the American Dental Association®, are the closest option to a natural tooth. In addition to looking like natural teeth, dental implants offer several other benefits.

Dental implants can preserve and maintain the health of surrounding teeth. Unlike other treatment options, the teeth adjacent to a dental implant can remain untouched if they are healthy. Dental implants also have the advantages of stabilizing the bite and being able to replace just one tooth.

Long-Term Commitment

A dental implant consists of the implant—or anchor—which is surgically anchored in your bone, a post inserted into the anchor and a crown or other prosthetic device attached to the post to replace the tooth.

Receiving an implant is a three-part process that takes several months to complete. The steps include:

- Insertion of the implant in the bone followed by a three- to six-month period during which the implant fuses with the bone, a process called “osseointegration”
- Installation of the post followed by a period during which the gum tissue is allowed to heal around the post
- Placement of the crown

Cost Can Be a Factor

Costs for implants vary, but it is likely you will use your entire \$1,300 annual maximum dental benefit for a single implant. You are also responsible for a 50 percent cost-share for dental implants.

MetLife recommends that you submit a request for predetermination of cost for both the implant placement and the crown or other prosthodontic service. This predetermination allows you and your dentist to know—prior to treatment—if the implant is covered and MetLife’s anticipated payment.

For more information about dental implants and TDP coverage, visit <https://mybenefits.metlife.com/tricare>. ■

Thumbsucking, Pacifier Use and Oral Health

The sucking reflex in infants is healthy, natural and so strong that some babies start in the womb. Pacifier use or thumbsucking is a self-soothing action that helps babies calm themselves and fall asleep. But moderation is best, especially when it comes to the effects of long-term pacifier use or thumbsucking on your child’s oral health.

According to the American Dental Association® (ADA), pacifier use and thumbsucking may cause problems after the permanent teeth come in, affecting the proper growth of the mouth and alignment of the teeth. It can also cause changes in the roof of the mouth. Children who vigorously suck their thumbs are more likely to have problems than children who rest their thumbs passively in their mouths. Pacifiers can affect the teeth in the same ways as sucking fingers and thumbs, but pacifier use can be an easier habit to break.

Usually children stop these behaviors between ages 2 and 4. To help your child stop thumbsucking or pacifier use, try these tips:

- Offer encouragement and praise when your child successfully avoids the habit.
- Work with your child to limit time spent sucking, and help develop your child’s self-awareness with gentle reminders when he or she engages in the activity. Your child will begin to recognize the habit and self-correct.
- Focus on what may be causing anxiety and talk to your child about other ways of managing stress.
- Ask your child’s dentist or pediatrician to talk to your child about the effects on his or her mouth.

Visit <http://www.ada.org/2977.aspx> for more information from the ADA. ■

Frequently Asked Questions

How can eligible members enroll in the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP)?

They may enroll online at www.tricare.mil/bwe, complete a paper enrollment, or contact MetLife via phone. To enroll online, members will need to obtain a Common Access Card (CAC) or Department of Defense Self-Service Logon (DS Logon) (if they do not already have one) to access the Beneficiary Web Enrollment (BWE) website. To get a DS Logon, visit www.dmdc.osd.mil/identitymanagement.

How can members see which dentists are part of MetLife's Preferred Dentist Program (PDP) network, also known as an in-network dentist?

Members may visit <https://mybenefits.metlife.com/tricare>.

How do members refer their dentists to MetLife to become part of the MetLife PDP?

A dentist can request an application and participation materials by visiting MetLife's dentist website at www.MetDental.com or calling 1-877-MET-DDS9 (1-877-638-3379).

Why should a member consider using a MetLife PDP dentist, also known as an in-network dentist?

Receiving treatment from a PDP dentist can save members money and paperwork. A PDP dentist has signed a contractual agreement with MetLife to follow TDP rules for providing care and accepting payments. When using a PDP dentist, members should never pay more than the applicable cost-share for covered services subject to applicable maximums, limitations and exclusions. Specifically, PDP dentists agree to:

- Accept MetLife's negotiated fee as payment in full, charging the member only the applicable cost-share; the negotiated fee is often lower than the normal rate charged by dentists in the area, saving you money
- Invoice MetLife directly for its share of the bill, so you do not have to pay the dentist directly and await reimbursement
- Complete the claim submission document for you and submit it to MetLife on your behalf
- Participate in MetLife's quality-assurance programs
- Provide any information needed by MetLife to make coverage and payment determinations
- Complete the *Department of Defense Active Duty/Reserve Forces Dental Examination* form (DD Form 2813) for National Guard and Reserve members



MetLife began administering the TDP benefit on May 1, 2012. Within the CONUS service area, how are current TDP members' orthodontic claims handled if the treatment began before May 1, 2012, and extends beyond that date?

MetLife will consider payment for orthodontic care up to 50 percent of the total fee or the MetLife orthodontic lifetime maximum of \$1,750, whichever is less, minus any previous payment issued by United Concordia Companies, Inc. (United Concordia). Any remaining benefits available under MetLife will be issued quarterly for the months the patient is in active treatment. For your convenience, MetLife has received the treatment information from United Concordia for those cases that extended beyond May 1, 2012, and is in the process of resuming payment. ■



A Healthy Mouth at Halloween

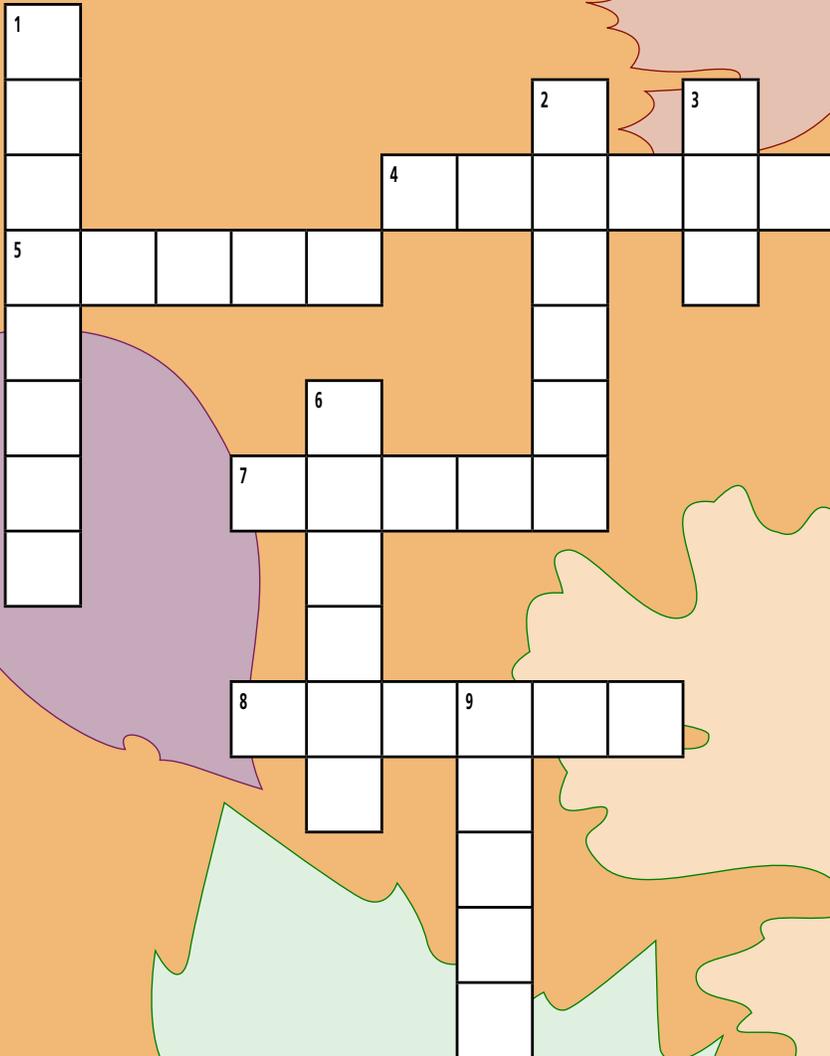
Between dressing up in costumes and going trick-or-treating for candy, Halloween can be a fun time of year. It can also be a challenging time for dental health.

Here are tips from the American Dental Association® for keeping a healthy mouth during Halloween and all year long:

- Eat candy or other sweets with meals—saliva that is produced while eating a meal can help rinse away sugars and food particles.
- Avoid hard candies and lollipops—candies that stay in the mouth for a long time can increase the risk of tooth decay.
- Avoid sugary drinks—drinking sodas and sports drinks that contain sugar can increase the risk of tooth decay.
- Brush your teeth twice daily and replace your toothbrush every three or four months. ■



Crossword!



DOWN

1. _____ helps remove food particles and plaque from the spaces between your teeth.
2. _____ is a layer that forms when plaque hardens on your teeth.
3. Chewing sugar-free _____ can help clean your teeth.
6. Tooth decay that forms when the enamel on your teeth breaks down is called a _____.
9. Eating lots of sweets, like _____, can cause tooth decay.

ACROSS

4. The sticky film that coats your teeth is called _____.
5. The _____ in candy and other treats can be harmful to tooth enamel.
7. Drinking lots of _____ can help prevent tooth decay.
8. Candies that are _____, like taffy and caramel, cling to your teeth.



Answers:

TRICARE

Dental Health Matters

Metropolitan Life Insurance Company
TRICARE Dental Program
P.O. Box 14185
Lexington, KY 40512

An Excellent Value

- Generous coverage
- Superior dental health care
- Decisions are health driven, not insurance driven
- High satisfaction with care
- Low out-of-pocket costs
- Easy access

"TRICARE" is a registered trademark of the TRICARE Management Activity. All rights reserved.



Provider Education: A Key Part of a Quality Dental Plan

The TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) understands the importance of education for its providers. That's why MetLife focuses on providing dental offices with information relevant to the latest research and trends in patient care.

MetLife, through the Dental Quality Initiatives Program, provides dentists with tools and information on current research. In doing so, MetLife helps ensure dentists remain in the forefront of best practices and reinforces MetLife's commitment to creating a positive experience for TDP members and dentists through education. Examples of education offered to dentists include the MetLife-developed Quality Resource Guides (QRGs). There are more than 50 QRGs offered on www.MetDental.com, MetLife's dental provider website. Each QRG reflects relevant best practices, research and industry trends including:

- Women's oral health concerns
- Blood pressure monitoring in the dental setting
- Oral health and the geriatric patient
- Management of patients with common medical conditions
- Risk-based management of dental cavities in adults
- Medical health history in the dental practice
- Management of the oral cavity in cancer patients ■

TRICARE Dental Program Resources

<https://mybenefits.metlife.com/tricare>

1-855-MET-TDPI
(1-855-638-8371) (CONUS)

1-855-MET-TDP2
(1-855-638-8372) (OCONUS)

1-855-MET-TDP3
(1-855-638-8373) (TDD/TTY)

Billing and Claims Filing

CONUS:

MetLife TRICARE Dental Program
P.O. Box 14181
Lexington, KY 40512

OCONUS:

MetLife TRICARE Dental Program
P.O. Box 14182
Lexington, KY 40512

Beneficiary Web Enrollment

www.tricare.mil/bwe

NE322BET08123DE