Hello everyone, here’s United Concordia Dental’s November Oral Wellness newsletter. Share it by using the “forward this email” button in the top corner. Or highlight a few selected articles, then copy and paste them wherever you like. Enjoy!

Honoring veterans every day

For more than 20 years, we’ve been honored to serve military members and their families, veteran and government employees. We’re proud to offer high-quality, affordable dental insurance to more than 3 million federal employees and members of the military community so they can get the oral care they need, when they need it.

And to us, it’s not just about supporting military members and veterans through access to dental benefits – we also believe in making them part of our team. We hire military veterans and retirees to serve the military community because no one understands their needs and challenges more.

Please join us in honoring and celebrating our veteran colleagues at United Concordia as part of National Veterans and Military Families Month. With respect, honor and gratitude – thank you, veterans!

Why do dentists need X-rays?

November 8 marks the International Day of Radiology, a yearly event to celebrate the importance medical imaging plays in health care. If you’ve been to the dentist, you’ve probably had images taken in the form of dental x-rays. But did you ever wonder how your dentist uses them?

There are many types of dental X-rays with different purposes. Some show a better view of a hard-to-see spot of your mouth; others help to diagnose a specific problem. Here’s a
breakdown of the 4 most commonly used dental X-rays and the info your dentist can learn from these images [1]:

1. **Bitewing X-rays** - Bitewings help your dentist check for cavities between the teeth and monitor bone density changes, which can be caused by gum disease. Bitewings can also help check for proper fit of a dental crown.

2. **Periapical X-rays** - These give your dentist a full view of the whole tooth, from root to crown. Periapical X-rays are used to detect issues in the structure of the tooth’s root or the surrounding bone.

3. **Panoramic X-rays** - Typically only needed every 3-5 years, panoramic X-rays show the entire view of your mouth in one image, including all the teeth from the top and bottom jaw. These can be used to prepare for braces or surgery, like wisdom teeth extraction.

4. **Occlusal X-rays** - This type of X-ray isn't used as routinely as the others. But occlusals are often used to show the floor or roof of the mouth and check for abnormalities like impacted teeth, jaw issues, extra teeth or tumors.

Talk to your dentist about what types of dental X-rays are needed for your personal needs and dental care.

Learn more about dental X-rays

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**Take part in the Great American Smokeout**

Smoking and chewing tobacco can lead to a range of health problems, and your oral health is no exception. Think about it - tobacco hits your mouth before any other part of your body.

Sure, tobacco can dull the wattage of your smile and lead to bad breath, but it has many more serious oral health risks, including dulled sense of taste and smell, mouth sores, cavities and slow healing after dental procedures.[2]

Quitting smoking or tobacco isn't easy, but it's worth it. From fresher breath to reducing your risk of gum disease and oral cancer, there are many oral health reasons to stop smoking. As part of the Great American Smokeout this month, make the commitment to kick butts.

Check out the positive effects of quitting

Get support from the American Cancer Society

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**Diabetes and gum disease are linked**
Diabetes and oral health can go hand-in-hand. People with poorly controlled diabetes are more likely to develop oral complications like gum disease. And gum disease makes managing diabetes more difficult.[3] It’s especially important for people with diabetes and signs of diabetes to keep their mouths, teeth and gums as healthy as possible.

Understanding how chronic conditions affect oral health is why United Concordia offers Smile for Health®-Wellness. It’s a program that provides enhanced coverage for eligible members who have diabetes and other chronic medical conditions. To find out if your dental plan includes Smile for Health®-Wellness, and check your eligibility, log in to your MyDental/Benefits account.

If you have diabetes, here are things you can do to help prevent or manage gum disease:

- Practice optimal oral hygiene and dental care.
- Control blood glucose (sugar) levels as best as possible.
- Avoid sweets and other empty-calorie snacks, which aren’t good for oral health or diabetes.

Learn about the diabetes-oral health connection
Find out if you’re eligible for Smile for Health®-Wellness

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**Onion, Spinach and Artichoke Dip**

Low in carbs and sugar, this dip is delish and diabetic-friendly. Enjoy it with fresh-cut veggies such as baby carrots, celery sticks, sliced cucumbers or bell pepper.

**Ingredients:**
- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 1 15-oz. can artichoke hearts, drained and rinsed
- ½ tsp. dried thyme
- 6 oz. spinach, coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup light mayonnaise
- 4 wedges light, spreadable cheese (such as Laughing Cow)
- 2 tbsp. parmesan cheese, divided
- 1 lemon, juiced

**Directions:**

Preheat oven to 350°. In large skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion and sauté 5 minutes. Add artichokes and thyme, and cook for 3 minutes or until veggies begin to brown. Add spinach and cook 1-2 minutes until wilted. Remove skillet from heat.

In microwave-safe bowl, combine mayo, cheese wedges and 1 tbsp. parmesan cheese. Heat in microwave for 30 seconds to soften, then mix well. If needed, heat mixture in 15-second increments until cheeses are soft and easily mixed with mayo.
Add cheese mixture and lemon juice to sautéed veggies and combine well. Spread dip into a small baking dish, top with remaining 1 tbsp. of parmesan and bake in the oven for 5 minutes. Serve warm.

**Nutrition Facts:**
20 Servings
Serving size: 2 tbsp.
Total Fat 2g
  Saturated Fat 0.5 g
  Trans Fat 0g
Cholesterol less than 5mg
Sodium 115mg
Total Carbohydrates 3g
  Dietary Fiber 1g
  Total Sugars 1g
Protein 1g
Potassium 110mg
Phosphorus 40mg

Choices/Exchanges: ½ Fat
Recipe courtesy of the American Diabetes Association

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**Rate your Turkey Day food faves**

Your mouth is sure to get a workout this Thanksgiving! Want to know the best and worst foods for your teeth and gums at the table this year? Find out how your favorite feast foods can benefit your oral health:

**Turkey** - It's packed with protein - just make sure it doesn't get stuck between your teeth.

**Mashed potatoes** - Potatoes are a source of vitamin C, B6 and potassium. But they're starchy, which can lead to cavities, so enjoy in moderation.

**Sweet potatoes** - They're rich in Vitamins A and C, which help keep your gums healthy. But avoid added sugar like maple syrup and marshmallows. Try adding a sprinkle of cinnamon or nutmeg instead.

**Cranberry sauce** - Freshly made cranberry sauce is higher in Vitamin C, has more fiber and can generally be prepared with much less sugar than its canned cousin.

**Pumpkin pie** - Pumpkin has Vitamin A, which promotes healthy gums and tooth enamel. Dessert served shortly after a meal means your saliva will keep flowing and help wash away leftover food.

Of course, the most important part of post-Thanksgiving dinner is rinsing your mouth with water, plus brushing and flossing before that turkey-induced slumber!

[Learn more](#) about Turkey Day treats and your oral health

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[1] [Dental X-rays](#): Webmd.com; 2019
[2] [Smoking and tobacco cessation](#): ada.org; 2019
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