

November 2020

## Oral Wellness Newsletter

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### Feeling safe at the dentist office

Wondering if it's okay to schedule your routine dental visit? Rest assured, dental offices have been protecting patients from diseases since long before the pandemic started.

The dentist's office is a safe, clean place. The staff is trained in infection control and how to help prevent COVID-19 from spreading. They already follow CDC guidelines and clean thoroughly before and after each appointment.

#### ***What to expect during your visit***

Overall, you'll notice lots of extra safety measures in place. Some offices may check your temperature first. You'll spend less time, if any, in the waiting room, where magazines may be gone and chairs will be socially distanced. You'll also have to wear a mask before and after treatment.

On top of strict disinfecting processes, dentists and hygienists will likely wear extra personal protective equipment (PPE) such as respirators, face shields and caps. You may be given PPE, such as a gown and goggles.

Some dental cleaning procedures may be different, too. The dental hygienist might skip polishing your teeth and use a hand tool instead of a water-powered tool to reduce spray droplets. During deeper cleanings, they might use other barriers to reduce spray.

#### ***Screening for symptoms before your appointment***

You might get a call asking if you've had a fever or show signs of COVID-19. Some offices may want you to get a COVID-19 test first. If you have symptoms, or have been around people with COVID-19 or symptoms, be honest. The office may advise postponing your visit.

[Get ways to keep your mouth healthy during COVID-19](#)



## The link between diabetes and gum disease

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 it harder to take care of diabetes.<sup>[1]</sup> So if you have diabetes or signs of diabetes, it's important to keep your mouth, teeth and gums as healthy as possible.

United Concordia understands how chronic conditions affect your oral health. It's why we offer Smile for Health®-Wellness, a program that provides extra coverage to help members with diabetes and other chronic medical conditions get their gum disease treated. To find out if your dental plan includes Smile for Health®-Wellness and check if you're eligible, [log into your MyDentalBenefits account](#).

Tips to help prevent or manage gum disease if you have diabetes:

- \*Practice good oral hygiene and dental care at home.
- \*Control blood glucose (sugar) levels as best as possible.
- \*Visit the dentist for regular preventive exams and cleanings.
- \*Avoid sweets and other empty-calorie snacks. Many drinks have added sugar, and even sugar-free kinds may be high in acid, which can harm teeth and gums.

[Learn more about the connection](#)

[Check if you have Smile for Health®-Wellness](#)



## Healthy babies depend on mom's oral health

Whether it's your first or fifth baby, pregnancy is both an exciting and overwhelming time for most moms-to-be. You need to take great care of yourself in order to take the best care of your baby, and dental care is no exception.

During pregnancy, your body goes through many changes that can make you more likely to develop oral health problems<sup>[2]</sup>. That's why it's an especially important time to visit the dentist to make sure your mouth, teeth and gums are healthy.

Pregnancy can increase your risk for gum disease, which research links to both low birth weight and premature babies<sup>[2]</sup>. Fortunately, these complications can be reduced through early detection and treatment with your dentist<sup>[3]</sup>.

Luckily, most United Concordia Dental plans include the Pregnancy Benefit, which provides expectant moms with an extra cleaning during pregnancy. You'll also have more coverage on services to help manage any gum disease that's detected.

[Download our healthy moms-to-be infographic](#)



## Roasted Sweet Potatoes with Honey and Cinnamon

Serves 4

That marshmallow-covered casserole is a classic dish on some Thanksgiving spreads. While sweet potatoes are loaded with vitamins, fiber, minerals and antioxidants<sup>[4]</sup>, cavity-causing bacteria can feed off the sugar left on your teeth from the marshmallows and other not-so-

healthy ingredients in the original version. But don't fret — here's a super-easy and delicious swap that'll fill the sweet potato gap on your holiday table, without all of the added sugar.

[Get the recipe](#)

**Ingredients:**

- 4 sweet potatoes (peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes)
- ¼ cup cup extra-virgin olive oil (plus some for drizzling cooked potatoes)
- ¼ cup honey
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

**Directions:**

Preheat oven to 375° F.

Lay the sweet potatoes out in a single layer on a roasting tray. Drizzle the oil, honey, cinnamon, salt and pepper over the potatoes. Roast for 25 to 30 minutes in the oven, or until tender.

Take the sweet potatoes out of the oven and transfer them to a serving platter. Drizzle with more extra-virgin olive oil.

*Nutrition info per serving*

304 calories | 15g total fat | 2g saturated fat | 216 mg sodium | 41g carbs | 5g dietary fiber | 2g protein | 24g sugar

Brought to you by [Food Network](#)



**Celebrating our military members**

In honor of Veteran's Day on November 11, United Concordia salutes all of the brave men and women who serve in our military forces to protect our country.

For more than 20 years, we've been honored to provide high-quality dental plans to military members and their families, including veterans and government employees. We're proud to help more than 3 million federal employees and members of the military community 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 care – 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, and all the retiree and veterans out there on Veteran's Day. With respect, honor and gratitude – thank you, veterans!



## Save time, save trees. Go paperless today!

2020 has been an especially stressful year, and the fourth-quarter dash doesn't help anxiety levels. From hustling to meet final deadlines to ensuring annual goals were achieved, there's a lot to wrap up. The last thing you need to worry about is misplacing an important document or cluttering up your desk with more paper. That's why United Concordia offers the option to receive paperless explanation of benefits (EOBs) statements.

We've even pledged to donate 25,000 trees to the [Arbor Day Foundation®](#) and their [Time for Trees](#) initiative, which has a goal of planting 100 million trees by 2022. So not only are paperless EOBs received in a faster, more convenient, and stress-free way, but you'll be making a direct impact on the environment.

[Opt-in to paperless EOBs now](#)

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[1] [\\*Periodontitis and diabetes: a two-way relationship](#); Diabetologia; 2012

[2] [Dental health during pregnancy](#); March of Dimes, January 2013

[3] [Periodontal Therapy Reduces the Rate of Preterm Low Birth Weight in Women With Pregnancy-Associated Gingivitis](#); Journal of Periodontology; November 2005

[4] 6 Surprising Health Benefits of Sweet Potatoes; [Healthline](#); January 9, 2019



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