Delta Dental Of Illinois Encourages Focus On Oral Health For Older Adults During Healthy Aging Month

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NAPERVILLE — This September during Healthy Aging Month, Delta Dental of Illinois encourages all adults, especially those 65+, to take time to evaluate their oral health needs.

While good daily oral hygiene is important for everyone, older adults can be at greater risk for oral health conditions such as gum disease, tooth loss and oral cancer.

“Every Illinoisan should maintain good daily oral health habits such as brushing twice a day, flossing daily and visiting the dentist regularly,” said Dr. Sheila Strock, vice president of dental services and chief science officer at Delta Dental of Illinois. “But older adults have special oral health care needs, which makes preventive care even more vital.”

Effects of poor oral health can go beyond a person's mouth. Research continues to show a connection between oral and overall health. Gum disease has been linked to several systemic diseases, including diabetes and heart disease.

A recent study by the National Institute on Aging found an association between oral health and dementia, with analysis revealing that older adults who have gum disease are more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease.

Regular preventive visits to the dentist — for Illinoisans of all ages, and especially those 65+ — can help prevent more complex, costly dental care later on.

"Visiting your dentist for regular checkups and exams is one of the most important things you can do each year for your health and well-being," Strock said. "During a routine exam of your mouth and jaw, your dentist can potentially detect early warning signs of more than 120 diseases."

Having dental benefits can help adults get routine preventive care as most dental plans cover dental checkups at 100%. People with dental benefits are also more likely to visit the dentist than those without coverage. In fact, more than 9 in 10 adults say having dental benefits gives them a reason to go to the dentist at least once a year to get the preventive oral health care they need, according to research by Delta Dental.

The time to enroll in medical and dental benefits for the new year is coming up soon. An individual dental plan provides coverage for preventive care as well as more costly procedures that older adults may need, such as additional cleanings, implants, crowns, and more. For more information and to compare plans, visit deltadentalil.com/individual-plans/plans-for-you-and-your-family.

About Delta Dental of Illinois

Delta Dental is the national dental benefits leader covering 1 in 3 Americans who have dental coverage. Delta Dental of Illinois is one of 39 member companies that make up the national Delta Dental system. Based in Naperville, Illinois, Delta Dental of Illinois provides dental benefit programs to more than 6,000 Illinois companies and covers 2 million individuals, employees and family members nationwide. Delta Dental of Illinois is committed to improving oral health in our community and furthers this commitment through the work of Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation.