

Oral Health Connection

ER Visits for Dental Problems

ER visits for dental problems on the rise

According to recent information from the American Dental Association (ADA), ER visits for dental issues doubled from 1.1 million in 2000 to 2.2 million in 2012. That is the equivalent of one ER visit every 15 seconds. Eighty-five percent of those visits were from people who did not have dental insurance or had a government insurance plan. While many opt out of dental coverage in hopes of saving money, they may be setting their selves up for more serious and costly health problems in the future.

Oral health education and prevention

Along with lack of adequate dental insurance coverage, ER patients have likely put off seeking medical attention until the problem has become unbearable, many of which could have been prevented through preventive oral care.

By forgoing dental coverage, many are actually forgoing preventive oral care. The National Association of Dental Plans (NADP) reports those without dental coverage are less likely to go to the dentist. Skipping dental exams can lead to long-term, serious diseases. Individuals without dental coverage are more likely to face oral health problems like extractions, dentures and gum disease because they don't get the preventive treatment they need. And those problems can extend well beyond the mouth. According to the NADP, those without dental benefits are:

- 67 percent more likely to have heart disease
- 50 percent more likely to have osteoporosis
- 29 percent more likely to have diabetes

Preventive dental checkups

During preventive visits, dentists can detect early signs of a variety of oral health issues and recommend simple fixes or offer less expensive treatment options.

Dentists may also detect early warning signs of more serious health issues that go beyond the mouth, such as cancer and heart disease. According to Cancer.org, dentists can often detect premalignant abnormalities and early stages of cancer in the oral cavity, including tongue, mouth, throat and lip.

Visiting the dentist for preventive checkups can save both money and teeth!

Be an informed consumer

Take caution if examining health care options through a strictly budget-focused filter. Lower rates can mean fewer contractual advantages, resulting in greater out-of-pocket expenses for patients.

Understanding and comparing the plan features offered by different carriers is key to finding the dental insurance carrier that best fits your needs. While certain product features can help save money on future treatments, others can add to the convenience of your experience.

**You can find more oral health tips by logging in to
our online member portal at DentalCarePlus.com.**

T H E P L U S I S S E R V I C E