

Smilematters

PATIENT FACT SHEET

The True Cost of Dental Care

The cost of dental care is often cited as a reason patients put off receiving routine dental care, sometimes waiting until they are in extreme pain to seek treatment. What many patients don't realize is that foregoing regular dental checkups can lead to more costly dental care in the long run.

And, not only can dental health be adversely affected, but patients may suffer related systemic illnesses that may be worsened by poor oral health.

Many diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and even pregnancy complications have been linked to poor oral health. If you have one or more of these conditions or are at high risk, routine dental checkups are especially important to prevent additional problems. Infections such as periodontal disease or an abscessed tooth can cause these conditions to be aggravated and may result in higher medical care costs, too.

In addition, if you suspect you may have an oral health problem such as an abscess, cracked tooth, cavity, etc., the cost of dental treatment can rise the longer care is delayed. Rather than a filling, you may end up paying for extraction, infection control, root canal, an emergency room visit, a dental implant, and so on.

Compare the cost of your twice-yearly exam and cleaning with the average cost of an emergency room visit! And then think of the possibility of suffering unnecessary pain or even losing work or school hours due to pain.

Patients who truly have trouble paying for dental treatment due to low income, lack of

dental insurance, disabilities and other circumstances should seek assistance before oral pain strikes. There are many resources available to help patients obtain the care they need. For instance, many private practices may offer discounts for those who pay with cash up front, or may provide payment plans for those in need of more expensive procedures. Community dental clinics can provide care at reduced fees, which are based on income. Community groups such as the United Way, local agencies on aging, and even church groups may be able to assist with childcare and transportation.

We value our patients and believe everyone deserves quality dental care regardless of income status. If you are experiencing difficulty with paying for your dental treatment, please let us know before cancelling an appointment, so that we may discuss available options.

If someone you know does not have dental insurance and is in need of dental treatment he or she cannot afford, visit the Michigan Dental Association's Web site at www.smilemichigan.com for a list by county of community dental programs and resources.

Remember, investing in your oral health is a smart investment in your overall health. It can lead to substantial savings on emergency dental and medical costs over time.



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