



Each year, dental illness causes 164 million lost work hours and 51 million dependent school hours missed, which often means a parent must take off work as well.

When you think about ways to keep your employees healthy and productive, you probably aren't thinking of promoting good oral hygiene. But, the connection between oral and overall health is becoming clearer each day. **The right dental benefits can promote healthier behavior.** Healthy employees are more productive, more satisfied and typically have fewer medical expenses. Consider these facts reported in the NADP study on consumer dental behaviors, which states that people with dental benefits have:

- **Healthier Attitudes** – Those with dental benefits are more likely to eat healthy, exercise, get an annual physical, brush twice a day and go to the dentist twice a year.
- **Better Oral Health Habits** – They are less likely to smoke and they brush and floss more frequently.
- **Less Disease** – They report a lower incidence of major diseases and conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes and periodontal disease.



Are You Driving the Right Behaviors?

The important findings above just further demonstrate the relationship between dental benefits and health and the increasing need for benefits that drive healthy behaviors. To help evaluate if your dental benefits are working hard for you, here are **four important questions** to ask:

Are you fully utilizing the strength of your dental network?

A strong network gives members better access to dentists who can provide care that saves them money and keeps them healthy. For you, the employer, more in-network claims can mean lower costs at renewal.

Does your dental plan design maximize benefits?

Flexibility allows you to customize a plan to meet your specific needs. Think about plans that offer incentives for in-network care or offer features that extend annual maximums.

Do you make preventive care a priority?

Features that encourage preventive care, like oral cancer screenings, and periodontal treatments can impact health and help reduce costs in the long run. Some plans may also provide additional cleanings if medically necessary.

Are you using tools to make better benefit decisions?

Online tools like a dental cost estimator can help employees understand the cost of care and see network savings. It should also be easy to find a dentist that meets their needs. In addition, you need to be able to know if the plan is working, with tools like claims reports.