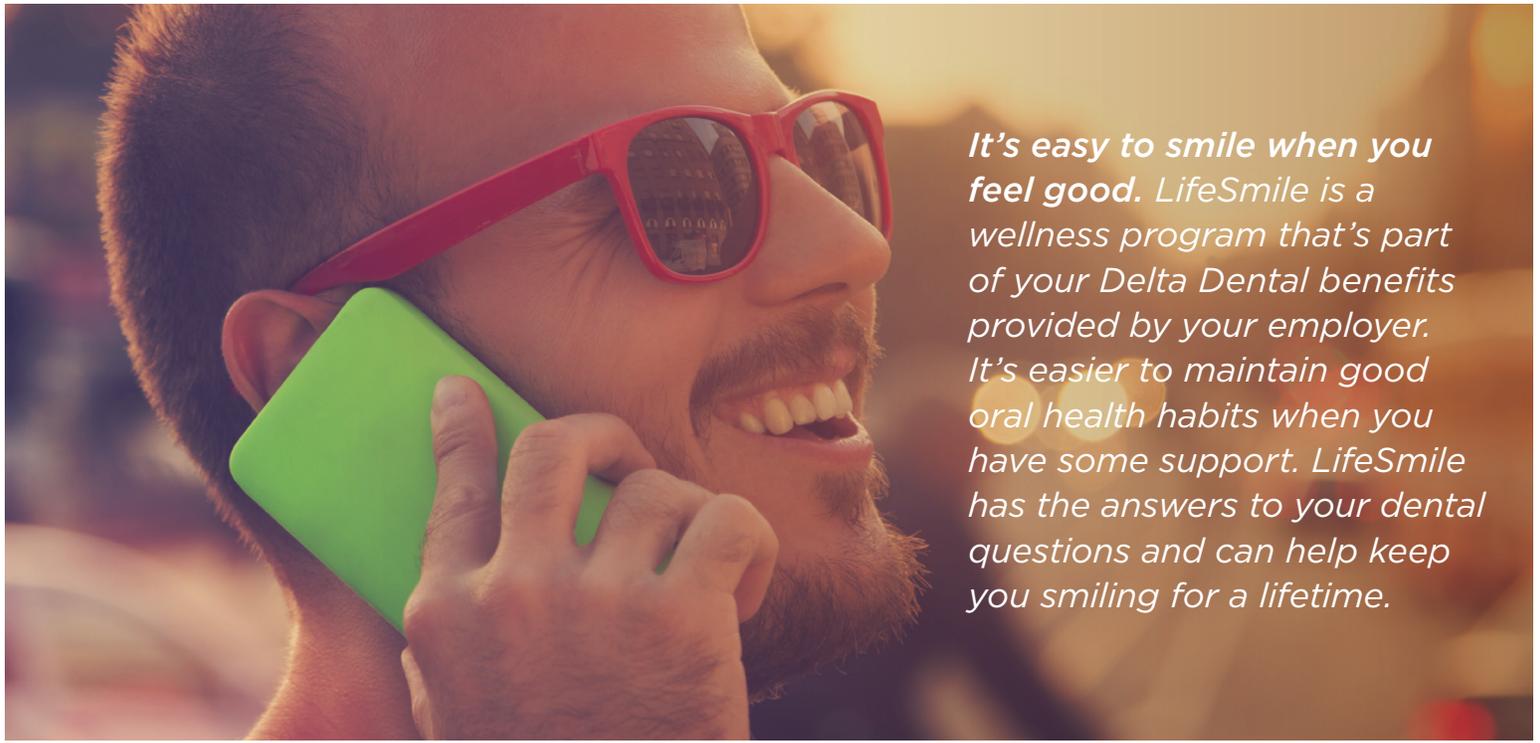


HEALTHY GUMS FOR HEALTHY SMILES

Gum disease is a chronic bacterial infection that affects gums and bone supporting the teeth. Major risk factors for gum disease are poor dental hygiene and smoking. Diabetes, unhealthy diet and stress can also increase your chance of developing gum disease.





It's easy to smile when you feel good. LifeSmile is a wellness program that's part of your Delta Dental benefits provided by your employer. It's easier to maintain good oral health habits when you have some support. LifeSmile has the answers to your dental questions and can help keep you smiling for a lifetime.

What You Need to Know About Gum Disease:

- In early gum disease, called gingivitis, your gums may be red, swollen and bleeding. At this stage, the condition is still usually reversible when treated with daily brushing and flossing, as well as regular dental cleanings.
- In later-stage disease, called periodontitis, your gums may be seriously damaged and begin to pull away from the teeth. You may also lose supporting bone. This stage of the disease may require surgical treatment and is not reversible.
- The first line of defense against gum disease is good oral care. Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, paying special attention to the gum line, and floss once a day.
- Also important: Avoid smoking.
- Finally, see your dentist regularly to have your teeth cleaned and checked.

When Your Gums Recede

Periodontal disease is by far the most serious cause of gum recession. If gum recession leaves the roots of your teeth exposed, your teeth may become more sensitive to hot, cold, sweet or sour foods and drinks. Your dentist may recommend using a soft toothbrush, special toothpaste, or a fluoride rinse. Here are some smart ways to help minimize the effects of periodontal disease:

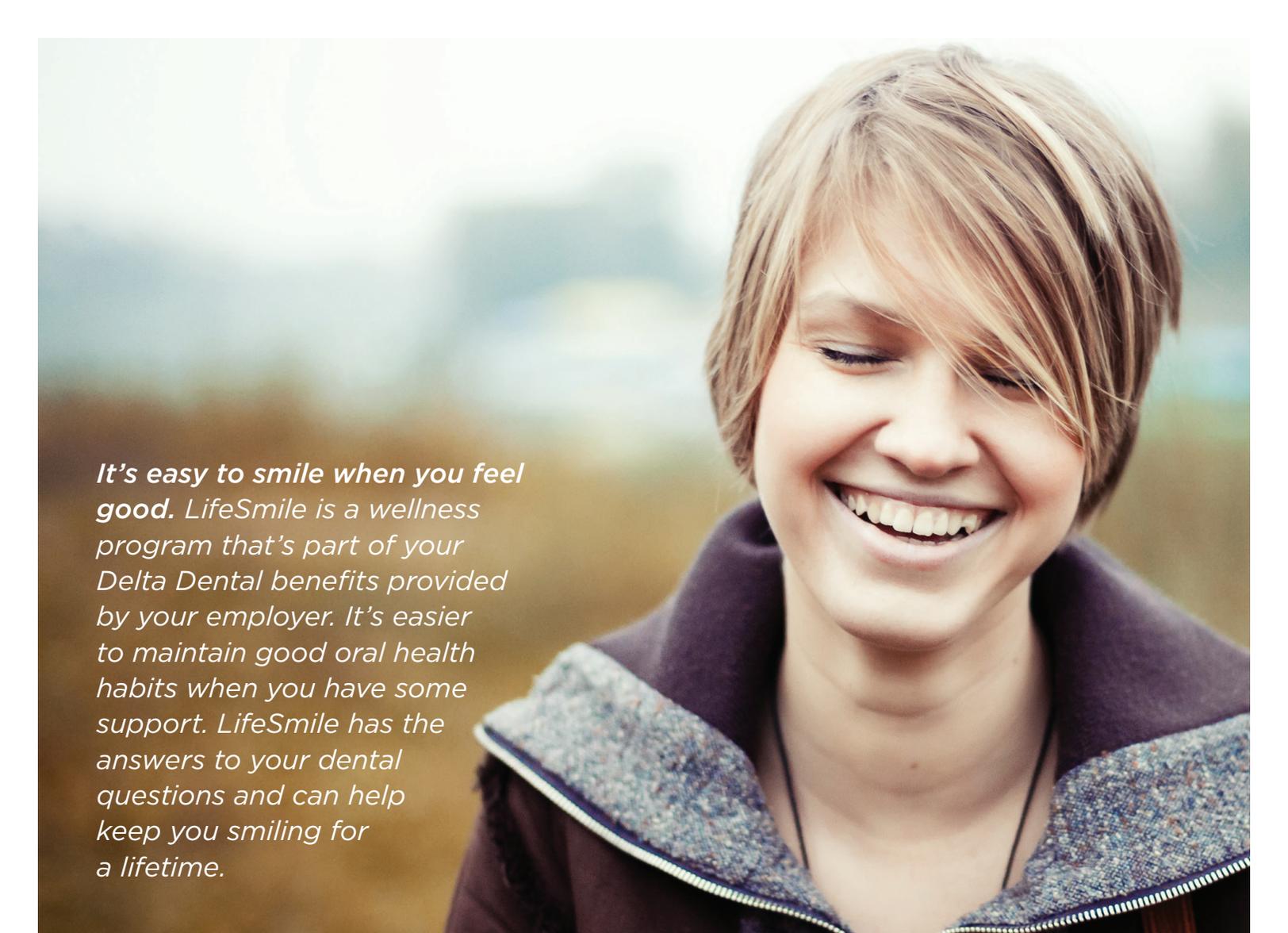
- Brush your teeth gently, at least twice a day, with special attention to the gum line. Use a fluoride toothpaste.
- Replace your toothbrush every three or four months or sooner if the bristles begin to fray.
- Floss at least once a day. Your teeth aren't truly clean until they're brushed and flossed.
- Visit the dentist routinely for a check-up and professional cleaning.
- Your dentist will check for gum disease and, if you do have it, will recommend a treatment plan to follow at home.
- Eat a nutritious diet, avoid sugary drinks and snacks, and snack wisely.
- Avoid smoking and all tobacco products.

Healthy Smile, Happy Life: Help prevent disease and stay on the path toward a healthier, happier life with LifeSmile from Delta Dental. Take advantage of numerous free resources for improving your oral health at oralhealth.deltadental.com.



HEALTHY SMILES ALL YEAR LONG

Oral wellness is the foundation for overall health, so regular visits to the dentist for checkups and cleanings are fundamental to making your smile last and preventing tooth decay and gum disease. Even if you don't have any symptoms, dental exams are important to make sure your teeth and gums stay healthy. And if problems do occur, they'll be easier to treat.



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LifeSmile from Delta Dental can help you prevent disease and keep you on the path toward a healthier, happier life. For tips, tools and resources to help you improve and maintain your oral wellness and overall health throughout the year, make sure to bookmark [oralhealth.deltadental.com](https://www.oralhealth.deltadental.com).

See Your Dentist Right Away If:

- Gums bleed often or pull away from your teeth
- Teeth are loose or separating
- You see red or white patches on gums, tongue, or mouth floor
- Mouth or jaw pain persists
- Mouth sores don't heal in two weeks
- You have problems swallowing or chewing

Help Your Dentist Help You

- See a dentist regularly. Doing so can help ensure that problems are taken care of before they become more serious and expensive.
- Choose a dentist who belongs to your plan's network. Switching from a dentist who isn't in the plan to one who is enrolled will likely save you money.
- Take advantage of any exams, teeth cleanings or X-rays your insurance may cover. Getting regular dental checkups, such as cleanings and exams, will help prevent dental complications or worsening of dental problems such as cavities.
- Become a partner in your dental health. Tell your dentist about yourself and your concerns, and ask questions about caring for your teeth. Make sure you also understand any treatment options your dentist recommends.

HELP HER SMILE LAST A LIFETIME

Growing up can be tough on teeth, but regular visits to the dentist for checkups and cleanings help children develop great smiles. And in between visits, LifeSmile from Delta Dental can help keep your child on the path toward a healthier, happier life.





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Top Tips for Healthy Little Smiles:

- Tooth decay is the single most common chronic infectious disease affecting U.S. children.
- When the first tooth erupts, at about age six months, clean your baby's teeth with a clean soft cloth or a baby's toothbrush and a tiny drop (about the size of a grain of rice) of fluoride toothpaste.
- At about age two, start brushing your child's teeth with a small pea-size drop of fluoride toothpaste.
- As your child gets older let them brush themselves, but until about age six, put the toothpaste on the toothbrush for them.
- Until about age six, you will need to help them brush—try brushing their teeth first and then letting them finish.

Your Child's First Dental Visit

- The ideal time for your child's first visit to the dentist is about six months after the first tooth erupts, usually just before your child's first birthday.
- Your dentist will demonstrate how to clean your child's teeth properly, and provide information on feeding practices for good dental care.
- The pediatric dentist will look for potential problems and check overall oral growth and development.
- Your child's teeth, jaw, bite, gums and oral tissues will be examined, and proper home-cleaning procedures will be demonstrated.
- Your child's medical history will be carefully reviewed by the pediatric dentist and preventive measures for dental disease will be discussed, including fluoride.

Healthy Smile, Happy Life: For more tips, tools and resources to help you improve and maintain your child's oral wellness and overall health throughout the year, make sure to bookmark [oralhealth.deltadental.com](https://www.oralhealth.deltadental.com).



PROTECT YOUR SMILE, PROTECT YOUR HEALTH

Current or former smoker? Lost a tooth?
Have diabetes? You could be at higher risk for
periodontal (gum) disease, tooth loss, or even
mouth cancer. Delta Dental makes it easy to
measure your risk with a quick and easy online
self-assessment at oralhealth.deltadental.com.



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What's Your Score?

- If you have ever smoked tobacco or used smokeless tobacco
- If you consume alcohol excessively
- If you have lost teeth not due to an accident
- If you have pain when chewing or sensitivity to hot or cold

Then it's time to measure your risk for gum disease, tooth decay and mouth cancer.

Is Your Healthy Smile At Risk?

By knowing your risks, you can detect problems earlier and have better treatment options. Here are some factors that increase your risk of infection, disease and even cancer.

What are the Risk Factors for Oral Cancer?

- Do you smoke? Smokers are four times as likely as nonsmokers to develop periodontal (gum) disease.
- Do you use smokeless tobacco? Using tobacco in any form increases the risk of oral and throat cancer.
- Do you drink often? Excessive alcohol consumption can increase your risk of oral cancer.
- Do you work or play outside daily in direct sun? Overexposure to UV rays can increase risk of lip cancer.
- Are you experiencing hormonal changes? Pregnancy and menopause can cause inflamed gums.
- Do you have diabetes, anemia, or cancer? People with these conditions are at higher risk for gum infections.

What's your score? If you're concerned about your risks, or if you want to learn more about preventing oral disease, visit [oralhealth.deltadental.com](https://www.oralhealth.deltadental.com) to take a quick risk assessment and find out how healthy your smile really is.