

# Good Dental Health Doesn't Need to Be Scary

Crisp fall weather, cozy sweaters, and cider, the start of the holiday season...there is so much to smile about with the arrival of October! But, unless you are dressing up as a jack-o-lantern or vampire, there's no reason for spooky teeth in that smile...not with the United Concordia dental benefits our members have access to through their EWTF Health Plan.

Did you know...

-  The three oral conditions that most affect overall health and quality of life are cavities, severe gum disease, and severe tooth loss.
-  By age 9, half of children (50%) have had cavities in their primary (baby) or permanent teeth.
-  1 in 5 adults (21%) aged 20 to 64 years has at least one untreated cavity.

Did you also know...

-  The United Concordia Dental Plan will pay 100% of eligible preventive care dental expenses when you visit a PPO dental provider. Other services are covered at 80% of the allowance with a PPO provider.
-  You and your covered dependents are eligible for reim-

More information on your United Concordia Dental Plan benefits can be found on the EWTF's Summary Plan Description at [www.ewtf.org/health-benefits-spd/dental-benefits/](http://www.ewtf.org/health-benefits-spd/dental-benefits/).



bursement of dental services of up to \$3,000 per year.

-  Effective January 1, 2011 children through age 17 no longer have an annual maximum.
-  When you visit a PPO provider for dental care, the provider accepts the discounted rate for payment. You will need to pay your Patient's Portion, if applicable. (If you do not visit a PPO provider, you are responsible for payment of the balance that the provider

charges above the PPO rate in addition to your Patient's Portion.)

When someone takes good care of their dental health, the benefits go beyond their pearly whites. Yes, a pretty smile says a lot, but your mouth may be saying even more about your overall health. Your teeth, gums and oral skin tissue can be indicators of health problems, such as:

**Endocarditis:** An infection of the inner lining of the heart chambers or valves, called endocardium,

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occurs when germs reach the heart, through the blood, from another part of the body such as the mouth. It is rare but it can be fatal.

**Cardiovascular disease:** Heart disease, clogged arteries and stroke might be linked to the inflammation and infections stemming from oral germs.

**Pregnancy and birth complications:** Gum disease called periodontitis has been linked to premature birth and low birth weight.

**Diabetes:** Gum disease seems to happen more often and be more serious in people who have diabetes because diabetes makes the body less able to fight infection, putting the gums at risk. Research shows that people who have gum disease have a harder time controlling their blood sugar levels. Regular dental care can improve diabetes control.

**HIV/AIDS:** Oral problems, such as painful mouth sores called mucosal lesions, are common in people who have HIV/AIDS.

**Cancer:** A number of cancers have been linked to gum disease, such as cancers of the mouth, gastrointestinal tract, lung, breast, prostate gland and uterus.

**Alzheimer's Disease:** As Alzheimer's Disease gets worse, oral health also tends to get worse.

**Pneumonia:** Certain germs in the mouth can go into the lungs and may cause pneumonia and other respiratory diseases.

Never forget that your mouth is a big part of the first impression you make on others and a big part of your overall health care. This is why dental care is a key component of the health benefits our EWTF members receive through their health plan. More information on your United Concordia Dental Plan benefits can be found on the EWTF's Summary Plan Description at [www.ewtf.org/health-benefits-spd/dental-benefits/](http://www.ewtf.org/health-benefits-spd/dental-benefits/).

SCAN this QR code to access all of the valuable links mentioned in this issue of *Through the Wire*.



# SPOOKED

## About Going to the Dentist?



**D**entophobia? It really is a thing. According to the National Institutes of Health about 36% of the population experiences true dental anxiety with another 12% experiencing extreme fear. Dentophobia often leads to dental avoidance—avoiding regular dental check-ups and oral procedures—which can lead to scary dental health problems.

Dental fears can be managed by:

-  Discussing your fears with your dentist
-  Using a hand signal to let the dentist know you need a break
-  Using distractions during your dental visit such as listening to music, a podcast or white noise through headphones
-  Practicing deep breathing
-  Inquiring about sedation options



# Let's Get Things Straightened Out

Do your teeth look like a jack o'lantern's? Are some here and some there and some nowhere to be found? You don't have to live with a smile of missing and crooked teeth when your dental plan offers coverage for orthodontia services and advanced coverage of dental appliances such as dentures, crowns, bridges, and implants (under covered conditions).

Braces aren't just for kids. The Plan covers orthodontia services for members, spouses, and dependent children up to age 26 at 50% of the allowance up to a lifetime benefit of \$3,000! And, braces don't just give you straighter teeth; they can give you better confidence and better overall oral health. In general, braces or other aligners help your teeth better fit together, creating a better, more comfortable bite. A better bite results in less stress on teeth and jaw muscles, more comfortable chewing, more even wear on teeth over time, and teeth that are easier to clean and maintain.

United Concordia Dental offers resources for our member participants on their website [www.unitedconcordia.com](http://www.unitedconcordia.com). Here EWTF participants can log in to better understand their benefits and even locate a participating dental provider. What's more, the

Wellness Resource tab at the top right offers a wealth of information on oral health, such as this one on the benefits of orthodontia: [www.unitedconcordia.com/benefits/oral-health-resources/dental-procedures/orthodontia](http://www.unitedconcordia.com/benefits/oral-health-resources/dental-procedures/orthodontia).

## KIDS' CORNER



### A Halloween Surprise

**COLOR BY NUMBER**  
Follow the color guide to color the picture below.

1 =

purple

2 =

gray

3 =

orange

4 =

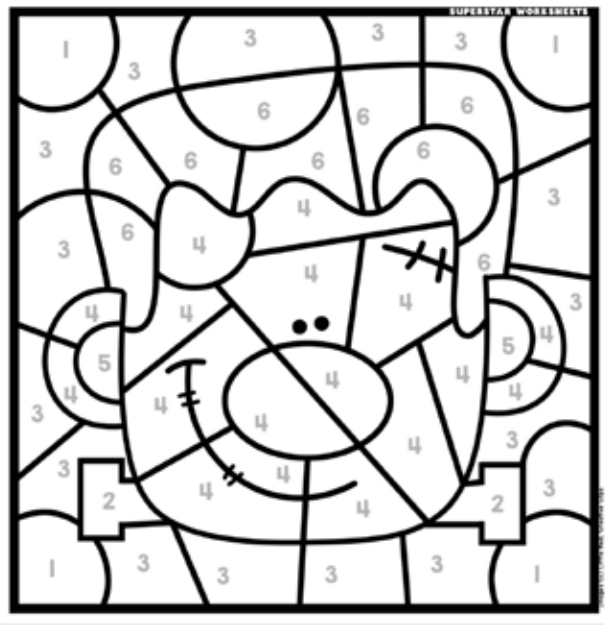
green

5 =

pink

6 =

black



**YOUR  
HEALTH CARE PLAN**

*protecting your family*

## Some Candy is Downright *Evil*

**W**hat's Halloween without trick-or-treating and what's trick-or-treating without a piece of candy or two...or four or six or...? When it comes to candy and dental care, not all sugars are equal. Some candy is actually good candy, ok well let's say "better than other candy," as it relates to your teeth.

To be clear, sugar is the enemy of dental hygiene because it leads to tooth decay and we all know that candy is high in sugar. (That's what makes it taste so good!) But some candy options are better than others so if you have the option to choose, choose with your dental health in mind. After all, you only get one set of teeth!

### Devilish Candy to Avoid:

- ❑ Sticky, chewy candy such as gummies, licorice, Tootsie Rolls, and taffies because they are harder to remove from the teeth
- ❑ Hard candy like lollipops and Jolly Ranchers because you tend to suck on them longer and expose your teeth to the sugar for longer periods of time. You can also crack or break a tooth on hard candies.
- ❑ Sour candies because not only does the sugar lead to tooth decay, the sour flavoring can break down tooth enamel and leave teeth more vulnerable to tooth decay.

### Less Scary Sweets:

- ❑ Chocolate easily washes off teeth and dark chocolate is even better because it contains less sugar.
- ❑ Sugar-free candy which stimulates saliva production to help wash out your mouth but without excess sugar.
- ❑ Candy with nuts because the nuts help scrape any stickiness off the teeth as well as break up plaque.

