Dental Care

Taking care of your teeth and gums as you get older is an important part of maintaining overall health. Dental care focuses on prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases of the teeth and gums. A general dentist can provide preventative care and maintenance. If more advanced care is needed, you can be referred to a specialist.

How do I get this?

**Medicare** – Medicare does not cover routine dental care but may cover disease-related services like those needed to treat oral cancer. You may have dental coverage through supplemental insurance or an Advantage Plan. To find out, call the customer service number on the back of your health insurance card. If you would like to purchase supplemental insurance or an Advantage Plan, call your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) office at 1-888-696-7213. You may only be able to purchase this type of coverage at certain times of the year.

**Private Pay** - Some people purchase dental insurance – contact your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) office at 1-888-696-7213 to ask about options. If you have dental insurance, call your insurance company to find out what services are covered. Also, the front desk person at your dental clinic may be able to help explain your benefits. Click the link below to see a list of dentists – always check to make sure the dentist accepts your insurance.

Colorado Dental Association - Find a Dentist: [www.findadentist.ada.org](http://www.findadentist.ada.org)

**Public** – There are public programs that help with the cost of dental care. You usually have to go through an application process to see if you are eligible.

- **Medicaid / OAP** - Depending on your income, you may qualify for Medicaid to pay for your dental care. The Colorado Medicaid Dental Program is run through an agency called DentaQuest. Those who receive Old Age Pension (OAP) also receive limited dental benefits through DentaQuest. If you already receive Medicaid or OAP, contact DentaQuest to learn more about your coverage: 1-855-225-1729 -- you will need to have your Medicaid ID handy. To find out if you qualify for Medicaid or OAP, you can:
  - contact your county Department of Human Services for eligibility guidelines and an application
  - visit [coloradopeak.secure.force.com/AC_Welcome](http://coloradopeak.secure.force.com/AC_Welcome) to complete an application online

- The **Colorado Dental Health Care Program for Low Income Seniors** provides services for older adults who do not qualify for Medicaid but who make less than 250% of the Federal Poverty Guideline. In 2017, you need to make less than $2,512/month for a 1-person household or less than $3,383/month for a 2-person household. Call 1-800-221-3943 for more information and a list of providers in your county. You can also find a list here: [www.colorado.gov/pacific/hcpf/colorado-dental-health-care-program-low-income-seniors](http://www.colorado.gov/pacific/hcpf/colorado-dental-health-care-program-low-income-seniors) -- click on “Grantee Appointment Information by County page”
Veterans - You may be eligible for dental services and should contact your county Veteran Services Office (VSO) for more information: [vets.dmva.state.co.us/?page_id=63](http://vets.dmva.state.co.us/?page_id=63). You can also call the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs: 303-284-6077 (Denver location) or 303-914-5832 (Lakewood location).

Community - Private and public organizations periodically assist in special circumstances. For more information, call your Area Agency on Aging / Aging & Disability Resource Center: 1-844-265-2372 (statewide). You can also call the Colorado Gerontological Society at 1-855-293-6911 for other options.

Things to consider
If you need to have expensive dental work done, ask for an estimate for the services before they are provided to you. Once you have an estimate, you can see a different dentist to ask for a second opinion. Then you can decide which is best and most cost-effective for you.

If you plan on applying for financial assistance to help cover your dental costs, do not start your dental care until you submit an application and receive an answer as to whether or not you’re approved for assistance. Often, financial assistance will not cover care that has already been started so it is important to plan ahead. Note: if you have a dental emergency, seek care immediately.

Most people go to a dentist office for routine care. There are also mobile clinics that may offer services in your area. If you are homebound, some dental hygienists will come to your home for teeth cleanings.

Need more assistance or want to talk with someone?
- Aging & Disability Resources for the Denver Metro Area: 303-480-6700
- Aging & Disability Resources for Colorado: 1-844-265-2372
- Colorado Gerontological Society: 1-855-293-6911
- Eldercare Locator (a national hotline for aging resources all over the US): 1-800-677-1116

Who provides dental care and how they are licensed:
Dentists are licensed to practice dentistry with either a DDS (Doctor of Dental Surgery) or a DMD (Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry, or Doctor of Dental Medicine). These degrees are the same – it just depends on what the university calls their program.

Dental hygienists are licensed to clean teeth and gums. They also teach you how to take care of your mouth at home. Their professional organization is the Colorado Dental Hygienists’ Association: [www.codha.org](http://www.codha.org).

Dentists and dental hygienists must renew their licenses every other year: [Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies - Verify a Professional License](http://www.colorado.gov/dora/licensing/Lookup/LicenseLookup.aspx)
Dental assistants work closely with dentists on certain dental procedures and often help with tasks before and after the dentist meets with you.

To file a complaint about a dental professional:
Colorado State Board of Dental Examiners
www.colorado.gov/pacific/dora/Dental_Board

Click on these links for more information:
Mouth Healthy (from the American Dental Association for consumers): www.mouthhealthy.org

Frequently Asked Questions – Colorado Dental Association:
www.cdaonline.org/public/publiced/frequently-asked-questions