

# Anthem Whole Health Connection – for dental

## Healthier teeth can mean better overall health

### Eligible members get an extra dental cleaning or periodontal maintenance procedure!

Any member who participates in Anthem Dental Blue,<sup>1</sup> Dental Prime and Dental Complete plans<sup>2</sup> and is actively managed in one of our Diabetic or Maternal Health Care Management programs through his or her Anthem health plan is eligible for an additional dental cleaning or periodontal maintenance procedure per benefit period.

We've also extended this benefit to other conditions, including:

- Heart conditions — heart disease, an enlarged heart, and mitral or aortic valve prolapse
- Organ or bone marrow transplant
- Cancer (any type) treated with chemotherapy
- Head or neck cancer treated with chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy

All eligible members have to do to get their extra dental cleaning or periodontal maintenance procedure is visit their dentist and submit their claim. It will already be a part of their dental coverage if they are being actively managed in one of our health care management programs.

### Did you know more than 90% of the body's diseases first show signs and symptoms in the mouth?<sup>3</sup>

That's why good dental health and the right dental coverage is important. Dental health might affect, be affected by or contribute to various diseases and conditions.

### Benefits to members living with diabetes

Did you know gum disease makes it more difficult for people with diabetes to control their blood sugar? High glucose (blood sugar) levels in saliva allow bad bacteria to grow. These bacteria along with food, create plaque, which can cause tooth decay, cavities, gum disease and bad breath.<sup>4</sup> Regular periodontal care can prevent and better control gum disease and blood sugar levels by having a positive impact on hemoglobin A1C.<sup>5</sup>

### Benefits to pregnant members

Hormonal changes associated with pregnancy increase a woman's risk for gingivitis or periodontal disease. Frequent visits to the dentist can help pregnant women maintain good dental health. In the last months of pregnancy, a woman might be uncomfortable sitting in a dental chair, so the best time for treatment is between weeks 14 and 20. Dental care is beneficial to the mom's health and her baby's.<sup>6</sup>

### Benefits for heart health

Researchers have found a connection between heart health and periodontal disease. Older adults who have more than four periodontal-disease-causing bacteria in their mouths tend to have thicker carotid arteries, a strong predictor of stroke and heart attack.<sup>7</sup> So regular visits to the dentist more often could protect more than just a great smile.

### Benefits for organ transplant patients

People who get organ transplants should wait to have dental treatment for at least three months after the transplant, unless it's an emergency. Serious complications are more likely right after surgery. It's important for patients to avoid dental work so that the organ isn't rejected because of any infections, including in the mouth. Three to six months after a transplant and once the doctors clear the patient for dental treatment, patients can have dental work with the dentist following any necessary precautions.<sup>8</sup>

### Benefits for cancer patients

Side effects from chemotherapy often happen if a person's mouth is not healthy before treatment starts. Patients can help avoid serious dental problems by going to a dentist before chemotherapy begins. The best time to see a dentist is about one month before chemotherapy starts. If they have started chemotherapy without going to a dentist first, they should go as soon as they can.<sup>9</sup>



**Our ConditionCare programs generate a return on investment (ROI) of 2:1. For every \$1 invested, employers can realize \$2 in savings.<sup>10</sup>**

## The value of integrated health and dental benefits

Many consumers don't fully understand the relationship between dental care and overall health. However, studies have shown a direct link between dental and overall health.

At the same time, many plans and employers are analyzing both health and dental claims to identify potential savings while improving members' health outcomes. Studies have shown that members living with diabetes while receiving periodontal treatment for active disease had the lowest spending, regardless of medical compliance.

**More is better.**

**Anthem Whole Health Connection<sup>SM</sup> allows members who have health and dental plans to enjoy more complete health profiles.**



#### Sources

- 1 Dental Blue not available in CO, ME, NH, NV and VA.
- 2 Extra cleaning benefit applies to: Dental Prime and Dental Complete products and Dental Blue products (excluding plans sold in CO, CT, ME, NH, NV, NY, VA). Extra cleaning benefits does not apply to Affordable Health Care products.
- 3 Academy of General Dentistry Know Your Teeth website: *Warning Signs in the Mouth Can Save Lives*. (Rev. January 2012); knowyourteeth.com.
- 4 The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases website: *Prevent diabetes problems: Keep your mouth healthy* (accessed December 2015); niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-topics/Diabetes/prevent-diabetes-problems/Pages/keep-your-mouth-healthy.aspx
- 5 Diabetes and Periodontal (Gum) Disease, Johns Hopkins University [http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/diabetes/diabetes\\_and\\_periodontal\\_gum\\_disease\\_85.P00349/](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/diabetes/diabetes_and_periodontal_gum_disease_85.P00349/)
- 6 Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website: *Oral health fact sheet* (accessed July 2012); womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/oral-health.html#g
- 7 The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research website: *Study Finds Direct Association Between Cardiovascular Disease and Periodontal Bacteria* (accessed February 2005); nidcr.nih.gov/Research/ResearchResults/NewsReleases/ArchivedNewsReleases/NRY2005/PR02072005.htm?\_ga=1.237782784.164400174.1432923242
- 8 The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research website: *Dental management of the organ or stem cell transplant patient* (accessed June 2014); nidcr.nih.gov/OralHealth/Topics/OrganTransplantationOralHealth/OrganTransplantProf.htm
- 9 The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research website: *Chemotherapy and Your Mouth* (accessed August 2013); nidcr.nih.gov/oralhealth/Topics/CancerTreatment/ChemotherapyYourMouth.htm
- 10 ConditionCare programs; Anthem Health and Wellness Solutions data study and Actuarial validation, 2009.

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