

HARRISBURG, Pa. (Sept. 20, 2010) – During October, National Dental Hygiene Month, United Concordia Dental, one of the nation's leading dental insurers, offers some suggestions to keep you smiling this month and year-round:

- **Establish an effective home-care regimen.** Remember, it is not how hard you brush, but how you brush that matters. Proper brushing includes not only your teeth but also your gums, tongue, and cheeks. Also, be sure to floss. Flossing helps remove particles between teeth that can cause tooth decay, gum disease and bad breath.
- **Visit the dentist regularly.** Regular visits to the dentist are important in promoting good oral health. No matter how well you brush and floss, there will still be plaque hiding in places that you cannot see or reach. This plaque hardens into calculus, which left untreated can lead to cavities and eventually gum disease.
- **Limit snacking between meals.** When the sugars in foods mix with certain bacteria in the mouth, acid is created. Eating throughout the day constantly exposes your teeth to these acids that wear down the protective outer layer — the enamel — of your teeth.
- **Drink a soft drink in one sitting—don't sip it.** Sipping allows the sugars and acids in soft drinks to continually coat your teeth and wear away the enamel. Drink soft drinks with a straw positioned toward the back of the mouth and be sure to rinse
- **Don't chew ice.** Your teeth are designed to last a lifetime, but they were made for food only. Chewing ice can cause fracture lines, cracks and chips, which can make the teeth more sensitive and lead to further damage.

"To keep your smile healthy, visit your dental care provider regularly for professional cleanings and oral exams," said James Bramson, D.D.S., chief dental officer, United Concordia Dental. "Often signs of certain diseases will appear in the mouth before they appear elsewhere, which means a dental checkup could detect more than just a cavity. And because plenty of research suggests that certain oral diseases and conditions may be linked to health problems in other parts of the body, your dentist can be an ally in your efforts to improve your overall health and well-being."

For more information on how dental health affects overall health, visit www.UnitedConcordia.com, or download the iDental mobile app, which offers access to oral health tips and available dentists by location, from the [Apple Store](#) or [Google Play Marketplace](#).

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