Delta Dental of Illinois
2017 Oral Health and Well-Being Survey

Smart plans for smart mouths.
Highlighting Oral Health’s Connection to Overall Well-Being

As the leading dental benefits provider in Illinois, Delta Dental of Illinois covers the smiles of 2 million members nationwide, including nearly 1 million in Illinois. We know firsthand the importance of oral health and its connection to overall well-being.

To shine a spotlight on these important topics, we commissioned a statewide consumer survey. Working with Kelton, a leading global insights firm, we surveyed 316 adults across Illinois. This sample size yields a margin of error of ±5.5 percent at a 95 percent confidence level.

We asked Illinoisans about their opinions and habits related to oral health. We explored topics both serious and light-hearted. And, we analyzed the results to uncover connections between oral health and overall well-being.

Here’s what we found:

Good oral health is strongly linked with overall well-being.

Dental coverage contributes to dental visits, which are linked to good oral health.

Illinoisans’ dental habits, including regular dental visits and tooth brushing, could be improved.

Oral health issues and educational opportunities persist today.
The majority of Illinoisans report their oral health as above average. In fact, more than 3 in 5 Illinoisans (62 percent) would give themselves an “A” or “B” grade for their oral health – and just 3 percent say their oral health is failing.

A closer look at the data suggests a significant correlation between strong oral health and strong overall well-being. Illinoisans who gave their oral health an “A” or “B” grade are more than twice as likely to report excellent or very good overall well-being.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade for Oral Health</th>
<th>% Reporting Overall Well-Being as Excellent or Very Good</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3%</td>
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Illinoisans who report oral health as “A” or “B” grade 67%
Illinoisans who report oral health as “C”, “D” or “F” grade 29%
Unresolved Oral Health Issues

While most Illinoisans report good oral health, more than 1 of 4 (28 percent) report unresolved oral health issues. Those with issues cite cost (71 percent) and fear of the procedure (32 percent) as top reasons for not having treatment.

Illinoisans without oral health issues are 48 percent more likely to report excellent or very good overall well-being.

% Reporting Overall Well-Being as Excellent or Very Good

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Illinoians without oral health issues</th>
<th>Illinoians with unresolved oral health issues</th>
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<tr>
<td>58%</td>
<td>39%</td>
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The majority of Illinoisans (63 percent) are proactive about seeing the dentist, noting their last visit was for a regular checkup. Yet, many Illinoisans say their last dental appointment was for an oral health or cosmetic issue.

Nearly 2 of 3 Illinoisans (65 percent) visit the dentist at least once a year. Illinoisans with dental coverage are much more likely to have regular dental visits than those who lack coverage.

% Visiting the Dentist at Least Once a Year

- Illinoisans with dental coverage: 72%
- Illinoisans without dental coverage: 55%

Reason for Most Recent Dental Visit

- 63% Regular Checkup
- 15% Pain in Mouth
- 13% Needed a Procedure
- 11% Possible Cavity
- 9% Chipped/Cracked Tooth
- 7% Teeth Whitened
- 3% Grinding Teeth
Illinoisans realize the importance of dental visits, reporting that the dentist is the top health practitioner they want to visit more often. In fact, twice as many Illinoisans say they don’t see their dentist often enough, compared to their general practitioner.

Health Practitioners Would Like to See More Often

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dentist</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dermatologist</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gynecologist*</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Practitioner</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urologist**</td>
<td>13%</td>
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*among women  **among men
Brushing Habits
Most Illinoisans brush their teeth twice or more a day. Still, more than one-third of Illinoisans (34 percent) do not, which means they aren’t brushing enough.

While brushing habits are generally good, nearly 2 of 3 Illinoisans (65 percent) skip a brushing at least once a month.

Frequency of Brushing Teeth
(Times Per Day)

- 51% Two
- 32% One
- 15% Three or More
- 2% Zero

Times Per Month Miss Brushing

- 35% Zero
- 31% Three-Six
- 23% One-Two
- 10% Seven or More
Overall Oral Health Dedication
Only 4 of 10 Illinoisans (43 percent) say they are extremely dedicated to their mouth, teeth and gums, showing a need for improvement in overall oral health habits.

Dedication to Mouth, Teeth and Gums

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely</td>
<td>43%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not very</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>3%</td>
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Dental Coverage and Well-Being

Dental Coverage

Illinois adults with dental coverage are **31 percent more likely** to visit the dentist at least once a year.

Dental Visits

Illinois adults who visit the dentist at least once a year are **nearly twice as likely** to report above average oral health.

Oral Health

Illinois adults who report their oral health is above average are **more than twice as likely** to report their overall well-being as excellent or very good.

Overall Well-Being
It’s the Smile

According to the Delta Dental of Illinois Oral Health and Well-Being survey, 72 percent of Illinoisans say a smile is one of the first things they remember most after initially meeting someone. And, more than half of Illinoisans (55 percent) say a smile has some bearing on a person’s overall success.

More than 7 of 10 Illinoisans (71 percent) say they like their smile. The fact that most Illinoisans like their smiles is a good sign, and Delta Dental is committed to providing access to great oral health care and education so Illinoisans can continue to feel good about their own personal smiles.

For more information, visit YourOralHealthHub.com.
Smart plans for smart mouths.