



TOP-DOWN DENTAL CARE



There are many whole-body health benefits from regular dental checkups. Your dentist will examine your teeth, gums, and mouth as a whole. This lets them spot any oral problems such as cavities, teeth grinding, or gum disease and recommend treatment plans to address them.

Keeping your mouth healthy can also boost your overall health. Daily brushing and flossing helps reduce the odds of conditions such as certain cancers and possibly Alzheimer's disease.

It's recommended to get a dental checkup every six months, but certain health conditions might necessitate more frequent visits. For example, diabetes and frequent consumption of alcohol and tobacco are linked to a higher rate of permanent tooth loss and oral disease. If there's a history of oral disease in your family, you may need more frequent check-ups.

Most dental benefits will cover 1-2 preventive checkups per year, as well as some further services. Check your benefits information to see what's covered. You can also use Health Savings Account and Flexible Spending Account funds for dental services.

EASY UNWINDING

If you've noticed that you're grinding your teeth, nursing a constant stress headache, or find your shoulders hiked up around your ears, it's time to take some steps to lower your stress.

Move. Moving your body can help you release stress. Whether it's a brief walk down your block, a longer weekend hike, or 15 minutes of yoga at the end of your day, physical movement helps your body create endorphins, which are hormones that help you feel better and calm your thoughts.

Meditate. Meditation is a practice in which one works on being mindful, aware of one's body, or focusing and clearing one's mind. Even 10-15 minutes a day can help you reduce stress, and may even help reduce your risk of heart problems.

Enjoy. Listen to music that you enjoy. Step outside and bask in the sunshine. Take time to do a hobby that brings you joy. Pet a furry friend. Take some solitary time to be by yourself and recharge.

Taking care of yourself will not only make you feel better in your downtime, but help you be happier and more productive throughout the rest of the week.



BENEFIT SPOTLIGHT

EXTENDED LEAVE

Life happens, and sometimes you need to take an extended period of time away from work outside of what your standard PTO and sick time off cover. This is where the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) steps in. It provides employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period to handle the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child, care for oneself or an immediate family member due to severe health conditions, or qualifying emergency due to a spouse, child, or parent being a covered member of the armed services on active duty. The FMLA ensures your job is protected while you are away (i.e., you cannot legally be let go due to your absence) and you keep your health insurance during the leave.

Some states, such as California and Colorado, also require employers to provide certain forms of paid sick leave or paid family and medical leave. In some instances, this paid leave also applies to employees affected by domestic violence or assault. These provisions vary widely by state, and not all states require employees to put paid sick leave provisions in place. Check with your local human resources office to see if there are any state-specific provisions where you live. If your state has both FMLA and paid sick family leave, your employer must follow the law that benefits employees most.

