**Additions to FAQ page for state associations**

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**Q:** When should a child start seeing a dentist?

**A:** Your baby is hitting new milestones every day, and his or her first dental visit is another one to include in the baby book! Your child’s first dental visit should take place after that [first tooth appears](http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/t/teething), but no later than the first birthday. Why so early? As soon as your [baby has teeth](http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/b/baby-teeth), he or she can get cavities. Being proactive about your child’s dental health today can help keep his or her smile healthy for life. Learn more at [MouthHealthy.org](http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/babies-and-kids/first-dental-visit/?source=promospots&content=rotator&medium=firstvisit).

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**Q:** Should my child receive sealants?

**A:** *Note:* [*Use sealants video*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOeKfLMk6WU) *from MouthHealthy*

Yes. Sealants are a proven and effective therapy for preventing cavities in children and teens. Children with sealants are up to 80 percent less prone to cavities compared to those without them. Read more at [MouthHealthy.org](http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/s/sealants).

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**Q:** What are amalgam fillings? And are they safe?

**A:** Dental amalgam is made from a combination of metals that include mercury, silver, tin, and copper. Sometimes described as “silver-colored” fillings, dental amalgam has been used by dentists for more than 100 years because it lasts a long time and is stronger than other cavity-filling materials. Study after study shows amalgam is safe and effective for filling cavities. Learn more at [MouthHealthy.org](http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/a/amalgam).

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**Q:** Do I need a dental plan?

**A:** For some people, buying dental benefits may cost more than paying a dentist’s office directly. When considering a plan—especially if it’s not provided through your employer—ask yourself the following questions to estimate how much you might spend out-of-pocket:

•    What is your plan premium?
•    What is your plan’s deductible?
•    What is your co-payment?
•    What percentage of treatment costs (coinsurance) will you pay?

When you consider the total cost of your dental treatment, you must remember to include the cost of the dental plan itself.

Another important factor to consider is what kind of care you regularly receive from your dentist. Are your regular checkups enough, or do you routinely need restorative procedures, like having cavities filled? Talk to your dentist about your dental history and possible care needs before making your decision. Because your health is always changing, revisit these conversations with your dentist before your policy is renewed each year, when it’s time for you to choose your benefits at work when you’re hired, or during open enrollment.

Notice that we have used the term dental benefit plan and not dental insurance. Insurance plans are designed to make you whole in the event of a loss. Insurance, by definition, entails a risk of loss to the insurance company.  Typical dental benefit plans are not designed to cover all dental procedures, and dental benefits coverage is not based on what you need or what the dentist recommends. Read more at [MouthHealthy.org](http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/dental-care-concerns/paying-for-dental-care).