

## Do you have gum disease?

If not treated, gum disease can lead to tooth loss. Take this quiz from the American Academy of Periodontology ([www.perio.org](http://www.perio.org)) to find out if you have any of the symptoms:

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- Do you ever have pain in your mouth?
  - Do your gums ever bleed when you brush your teeth or eat hard food?
  - Have you noticed spaces developing between your teeth?
  - Do your gums ever feel swollen or tender?
  - Have you noticed that your gums are receding (pulling back from your teeth) or your teeth appear longer?
  - Do you have persistent bad breath?
  - Have you noticed pus between your teeth and gums?
  - Have you noticed any change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite?
  - Do you ever develop sores in your mouth?





## Prevent baby bottle tooth decay

Bottles given at naptime or bedtime can cause baby teeth to decay over time. Bacteria in the baby's mouth and the natural sugar in fruit juice, soda, and even milk and formula linger, resulting in acids that erode teeth enamel. Here are some ways to help avoid the problem:

- › Wipe your infant's gums with gauze or a damp washcloth after feeding.
- › Don't allow your baby to fall asleep with a bottle.
- › Never dip a pacifier in any type of sweetened syrup or liquid.
- › Teach your baby to drink from a cup as soon as possible.
- › Discourage your child from carrying around a bottle with sweetened liquids to sip all day.

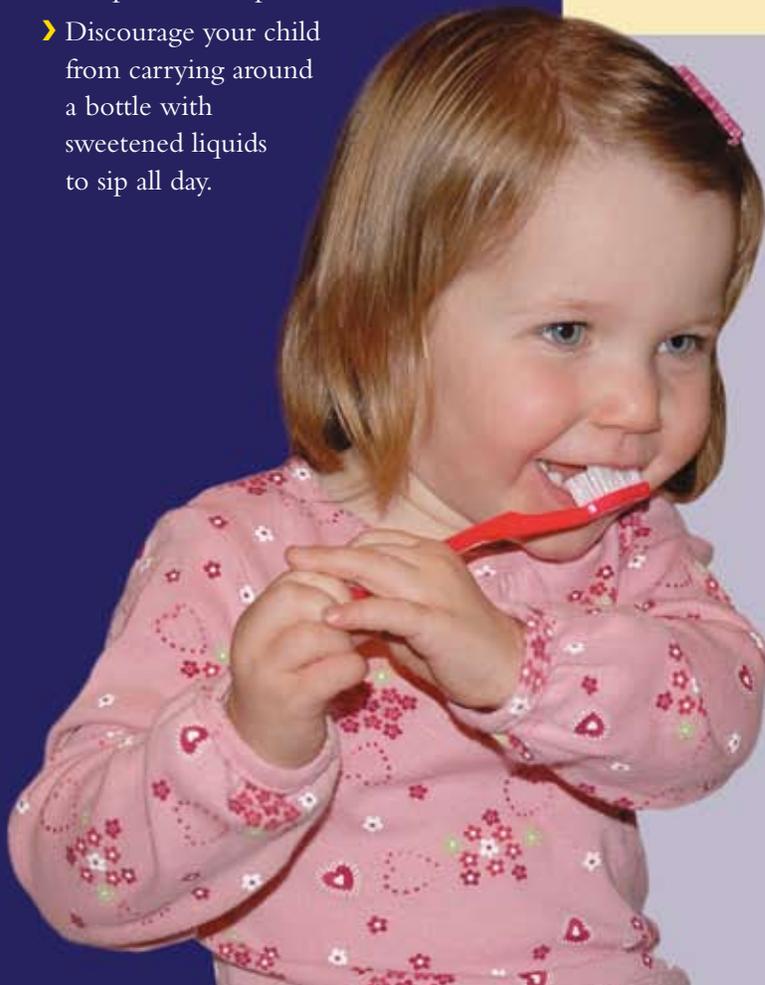
## When a routine cleaning just isn't enough

Most people who floss and brush every day require a routine cleaning during their twice-a-year dentist visits. This involves removing tartar; polishing and removing stains; and assessing gums with a periodontal probe. Sometimes a more involved procedure is needed that dental plans usually cover as a basic or major service.

- › **Scaling and root planing** is required when the measure of bone level around each tooth reveals a loss of bone, or periodontal disease. Often called deep scaling, this procedure is billed by quadrants (quarters) of the mouth and may require more than one appointment. Most dental benefits cover this procedure, after a copayment, once every three years.\*
- › **Full-mouth debridement** is needed when there's so much tartar around the teeth that the gums can't be accurately examined. Various instruments are used to remove the tartar buildup. Your dental plan may or may not cover this procedure, which usually is done at or soon after the initial visit.

HumanaDental suggests requesting an estimate, known as a predetermination of benefits, when treatment beyond a routine cleaning is recommended. Decisions on treatment are between you and your dentist.

\* Benefits are subject to deductibles, annual maximum benefits, and frequency limits, based on plan provisions, that may impact your share of the cost. See your group benefit plan document for details.



## First trip to the dentist

**Take steps to make sure your children's early visits to the dentist's office are enjoyable:**

1. Set a good example by brushing and flossing with your children every day, and regularly visiting the dentist.
2. Explain how the "tooth doctor" is important in keeping teeth healthy.
3. Share a children's book about going to the dentist to ease fears and help your child understand what to expect.
4. Play "dentist" at home, using a flashlight to look into each other's mouth.
5. Talk positively about the appointment, withholding any bad experiences or anxiety you have.
6. Avoid words that may create fear: hurt, drill, shot, needle.
7. Don't bribe your child into going to the dentist or use the visit as a threat or punishment.