



Delta Dental of Minnesota

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What Should Minnesota Children Expect Under Their Pillows?

Despite Sluggish Economy, The Tooth Fairy PollSM Exposes Generosity

February 21, 2008 (EAGAN, Minn.) – The results are in! The Tooth Fairy PollSM from Delta Dental of Minnesota reports an increase in the current average “gift” Minnesota children receive from the Tooth Fairy. In Minnesota, children receive an average of \$2.10 per tooth, which is up from last year’s gift of \$1.46 – a 44 percent increase. The national average is \$2.09. Tooth Fairy gift amounts range from a low of five cents to a high of \$50 per tooth.

“The Tooth Fairy Poll average usually reflects the health of the economy. However, this direction of change is inconsistent with trends exhibited in other more commonplace indices,” said Marty Weiland, operations analyst for Delta Dental of Minnesota. “The NASDAQ and Dow Jones Industrial Average indices have decreased 7.4 percent and 3.6 percent over this same time period, respectively.”

“It is worth noting that the substantial upswing was largely driven by a substantial increase in the number of five-dollar gifts,” continues Weiland. “So either the Tooth Fairy is an expert investor or we may be seeing something analogous to the ‘lipstick effect’ where during an economic downturn or a recession, the tendency is for consumers to purchase small, comforting items rather than large luxury items.”

OPEN UP AND SAY “AHHH”

According to Delta Dental’s poll, which goes out to a sampling of its commercially insured population, more than half of children’s first dental visits do not occur until age three or later. “The American Dental Association recommends that a child be seen by a dentist as soon as his or her first tooth erupts, but at least no later than the first birthday,” said Dr. Richard Hastreiter, dental director for Delta Dental of Minnesota.

“Regular visits give the dentist an opportunity to evaluate the child’s teeth and discover any problems in their earliest stages. Tooth decay is the most common childhood disease - yet it is completely preventable.”

(more)

A STICKY SITUATION

The poll also revealed that more than one third of the parents indicate their children consume an average of three or more sugar drinks and/or treats per day. "Parents are instrumental in teaching healthy habits to their children at an early age," says Dr. Hastreiter. "Encourage children to make healthy choices. Teach them to eat a balanced diet and limit in-between meal snacks of foods containing high levels of sugar, especially sticky foods such as raisins, fruit snacks or candy. This will help promote good dental health as well as overall health."

"Sticky foods tend to adhere to the teeth and gums, making them more likely to contribute to tooth decay," continues Dr. Hastreiter. "Children should brush with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste after sugary or starchy meals or snacks to help reduce the incidence of tooth decay. Children should also drink fluoridated water after meals to help cleanse the teeth."

CHEW ON THIS

The poll shows most Minnesota children are working hard to keep their teeth clean. According to the poll, 73 percent of parents report that their children brush their teeth twice per day. Approximately 92 percent of parents surveyed state their children receive a dental exam every six months.

Delta Dental of Minnesota's oral health initiatives are part of its broader non-profit mission to provide educational information and support community programs that help enhance the oral health of all Minnesotans.

About Delta Dental of Minnesota

Delta Dental of Minnesota is an affiliate of DeCare International. Delta Dental of Minnesota is an independently operated, nonprofit dental services company that administers self-insured and prepaid dental service plans. Delta Dental of Minnesota serves more than 8,300 employer groups with more than 3.2 million members in Minnesota and across the nation. Headquartered in Eagan, Delta Dental of Minnesota has a customer service center on Minnesota's Iron Range. For more information, visit www.deltadentalmn.org.

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