



Delta Dental of Minnesota

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Delta Dental of Minnesota Announces 2009 Tooth Fairy Poll<sup>SM</sup> Results**

*Tooth Fairy is affected by the economy, too*

**March 2, 2009 (EAGAN, Minn.)** – The results are in: Delta Dental of Minnesota announced the 2009 Tooth Fairy poll, which shows a decrease in the average gift Minnesota children receive from the Tooth Fairy for a missing tooth. The poll is derived from a survey of Delta Dental of Minnesota members and their families.

In Minnesota, children receive an average of \$1.62 per tooth, which is down from last year's gift of \$2.10 – a 23 percent decrease.

“The change in the Tooth Fairy Poll average is consistent with trends exhibited in other more commonplace indices – although I will say the Tooth Fairy’s economic performance beat the stock market,” said Marty Weiland, operations analyst for Delta Dental of Minnesota. “The Dow Jones Industrial Average, for example, decreased 32 percent during the same time period.”

### **SOMETHING TO CHEW ON**

According to the poll, more than half of children’s first dental visits do not occur until age three or later. “An important point to reiterate is that 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.

### **OPEN WIDE**

Approximately 90 percent of parents surveyed state their children receive a dental exam every six months. “The frequency of dental visits should be determined by the child’s dentist, based on an assessment of the child’s unique oral health needs — rather than on a pre-set schedule,” continued Dr. Hastreiter. “This approach ensures that each child receives the most appropriate, timely care.”

### **SWEET TOOTH**

The poll also revealed some positive news. The numbers suggest children are consuming less sugary drinks and/or treats. Parents surveyed indicated their children consume an average of one to two sugar drinks and/or treats per day. “Parents are instrumental in teaching healthy habits to their children at an early age,” said 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. This will help promote good dental health as well as overall health.”

*(more)*

## **BRUSHING UP**

The poll shows most Minnesota children are working hard to keep their teeth clean. According to the poll, 86 percent of parents report that their children brush their teeth in the morning, and 94 percent of children brush at night, with only 2.5 percent brush at noon. “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,” continues Dr. Hastreiter. “Children should also drink fluoridated water after meals to help cleanse the teeth.”

### ***About Delta Dental of Minnesota***

*Delta Dental of Minnesota’s oral health initiatives are part of its non-profit mission to provide educational information and support community programs that help enhance the oral health of all Minnesotans. An independent, non-profit health services company, we take seriously our mission to serve Minnesotans’ oral health needs. Since 1969, we’ve accomplished this mission by providing the best access across the state to oral health care through affordable dental plans.*

*Delta Dental serves more members from Minnesota-based groups (3.4 million members from 8,400 employer groups) than any other dental benefits provider. Delta Dental of Minnesota is based in Eagan, and has an operations center (customer service, claims processing, and broker and small group sales and account management) on the Iron Range. For more information, visit [www.deltadentalmn.org](http://www.deltadentalmn.org).*

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