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**Contact:** Chris Duffy, 612-599-7982  
[duffy@goffpublic.com](mailto:duffy@goffpublic.com)

## **Tooth Fairy Payouts Hit Hard Times**

*Average under-the-pillow gifts dip by 11 percent*

**MINNEAPOLIS, Minn** – The Tooth Fairy has tightened her money bag after an all-time high payout last year. According to the [Original Tooth Fairy Poll](#), sponsored by Delta Dental, the Tooth Fairy's cash gifts in 2017 dropped to an average of \$4.13, a 53 cent drop from 2016.

Delta Dental's Original Tooth Fairy Poll typically serves as a good indicator of the economy's overall direction, tracking with the movement of Standard & Poor's 500 index (S&P 500) for 12 of the past 14 years. The December 2017 poll shows the Tooth Fairy hasn't quite been able to keep up with the market's hot pace—with an 11 percent cash payout decrease from 2016, while the S&P 500 saw a total return in 2017 of almost 18 percent.

Even though the average price of a tooth has dropped, the Tooth Fairy still paid out a hefty \$271 million in 2017 for lost teeth across the nation. Children looking under their pillow for their first lost-tooth payout took less of a hit, receiving an average \$5.70 per tooth, only a minor drop from 2016 which saw a \$5.72 payout.

"This is a fun survey that we look forward to every year, and it's incredible how closely tooth fairy payouts correspond with the overall state of the economy," said Rodney Young, CEO and president of Delta Dental of Minnesota. "But most importantly, this announcement provides us with a great opportunity to teach kids about good oral health habits at an early age."

Other Tooth Fairy stats:

- The Tooth Fairy visits 84 percent of the nation's households with children.
- Fifty-five percent of parents confess that the Tooth Fairy may have missed a visit at some time.
- While the Tooth Fairy leaves money at 95 percent of the homes she visits, some parents say that the Tooth Fairy also leaves a small toy or game (47 percent), a letter from the Tooth Fairy (35 percent) or a tooth brush (31 percent) in addition to or instead of money.

Regional statistics:

- Tooth Fairy payouts are highest in the West with \$4.85 (\$6.76 for the first tooth).
- Followed by the Northeast at \$4.35 (\$6.45).
- The South gave \$4.12 (\$5.68).
- The Midwest is at \$3.44 (\$4.37).

About the Survey: The Original Tooth Fairy Poll was conducted between December 13 and December 28, 2017 among a nationally representative sample of 1,007 parents of children ages 6-12. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percent.

For fun Tooth Fairy related activities for kids, including video, activity sheets and oral health tips, visit [DeltaDentalMN.org/tooth-fairy-day/](http://DeltaDentalMN.org/tooth-fairy-day/).

**Delta Dental of Minnesota**

Delta Dental of Minnesota is an independent, nonprofit health services company that serves the oral health needs of Minnesota and North Dakota residents. Since 1969, Delta Dental of Minnesota has accomplished this mission by providing the best access across the state to oral health care through affordable dental plans. Delta Dental of Minnesota is an authorized licensee of the Delta Dental Plans Association of Oak Brook, Illinois. To learn more, visit [DeltaDentalMN.org](http://DeltaDentalMN.org).

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