

# Routine care saves later costs

In challenging times, it is human nature to begin to tighten the purse strings to reduce unnecessary spending. Unfortunately, many feel that routine dental care is not a necessary expense. However, a review of records in my practice has shown that those patients who have chosen to “cut out” one or two recare dental visits each year tend to have higher dental care expenses in the long run. The reason is simple...smaller problems are less expensive to fix than big problems.

Support for this theory comes not only from the records in my practice but from the effects of Medicaid budget cuts. Every year or so, Medicaid benefits for dental care are considered to be removed from the state budget. When Medicaid does not pay for dental care, unmet dental needs turn into dental abscesses and emergencies that drive patients to hospital emergency rooms. Everyone knows that hospital emergency room visits are much more costly than dental visits.

Regular recare dental vis-



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its allow dentists to identify problems as early as possible so that appropriate repair therapy can be planned. For example, gum disease can be identified when moderate treatment is still possible rather than waiting until more costly therapy such as surgery is the only alternative. Cracked teeth can be identified early so that conservative crown therapy may be done without the necessity of root canal therapy or extraction and tooth replacement therapy. Cavities can be discovered when conservative fillings can be done rather than waiting until a root canal or extraction is necessary.

Along with maintaining dental recare schedules during difficult economic times, it is important not to skip appropriate dental x-rays and recommended dental fluoride therapy. Often patients

refuse these necessities, mistakenly thinking that it is saving them money. However, fluoride varnishes have been proven to reduce the incidence of tooth decay, thus saving money in the long run. A lot of fluoride treatments can be done for the expense of one dental restoration. So, if even one cavity is prevented, it is worth it. Small cavities are seldom visible clinically, but dental x-rays allow early diagnosis. In summary, the best way to minimize unnecessary dental costs is to maintain regular dental maintenance and to discuss alternative restorative therapy options with your dentist.

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*For questions about dental health or to schedule a complementary consultation, call 330-364-2011, visit [www.doctorhuff.net](http://www.doctorhuff.net), or ask your regular dentist.*

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