

## HEALTH

# Don't Skip Routine Dental Cleanings

NewsUSA

(NU) - Most people brush and floss their teeth regularly. However, many of these same people are also skipping trips to the dentist. Yes, money may be tight. But is the long-term risk worth the temporary monetary reward?

Lack of coverage may be contributing to skipped dental visits. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, of the 172 million Americans under 65 who have health insurance, 45 million don't have dental care. Medicare doesn't cover routine dental care, and many dentists don't accept Medicaid. Dental procedures can be costly – Americans spent \$102 billion on dental services in 2009. Yet, a simple routine cleaning costs much less than a root canal.

Insured or not, these tips will help you with the preventive care that could save you big in the long run:

- **If you have insurance, use it.** Don't view the dentist as an inconvenience.
- **Uninsured? Don't worry.** People without insurance can seek out dental clinics or training schools associated with universities. Training schools often search for patients to help develop students' skills. Volunteering for a practice cleaning session may only cost a small fee – or it may be free.
- **Watch what you eat.** Sticky, sugary foods adhere to teeth, pro-



**Routine care helps prevent more serious problems later.**

viding food for the destructive bacteria that cause dental diseases. Try to avoid candy and sodas, and limit snacking, so you're not constantly bathing your teeth in sugar. Drink water after eating to flush food from your mouth.

- **Clean your teeth regularly.** Yes, you've heard it before – brush twice daily and floss at least once daily. You may also want to try oral care probiotics, or “beneficial” bacteria, such as EvoraPlus ([www.myevoraplus.com](http://www.myevoraplus.com)). The probiotics compete with harmful bacteria for both nutrients and space, making it difficult for bad bacteria to survive.
- **Replace your toothbrush if the bristles become frayed.** According to the Mayo Clinic, you should purchase a new toothbrush or a replacement head for your electric toothbrush every three to four months.