



Attention: Medicare-Eligible American Indians

Questions and Answers About the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

Q: What happens if I don't sign up?

A: You will continue to receive the same prescription drug benefits.

Q: How much will it cost me?

A: This is very individual, depending on whether you are low-income and eligible for extra help to help with your premiums, deductibles, and co-pays. Siletz Tribal members can apply for reimbursement for premiums. We think that you need to use more than \$600 of prescriptions (\$50 per month) before there is a reason to join a plan.

Q: Will it benefit the Siletz Tribe if I do sign up?

A: If you receive more than \$600 in prescription drugs from the Siletz Clinic, then the tribe will benefit if you join a plan. Call one of the contacts listed below to find out how much you used in prescriptions last year.

The clinic is only using two plans, however, so you must sign up with either:

- Asuris – the Blue Cross plan
- Rx America – the Good Samaritan plan

Q: Should I apply first for extra help through the Social Security Administration because I am low-income to help pay for my premiums, deductibles, and co-pays?

A: If you are a Siletz Tribal member and would like the Siletz Tribe to reimburse you for your premiums, you must

first apply for extra help. Extra help is available if your savings, investments, and real estate (other than your home) are not worth more than \$11,500 if you are single, or \$23,000 if you are married and living with your spouse.

We understand there is currently a one- to two-month wait to hear back as to whether you qualify or not. You should not sign up for a plan until you hear back.

Q: What if I don't sign up by Jan. 1?

A: You will continue to receive the same prescription drug benefits.

Q: What if I don't sign up by May 15?

A: As an American Indian eligible for prescriptions at the Siletz Clinic, you have what is called "creditable coverage." So if you decide to sign up later, you can do so at no penalty.

Q: Where can I go for help?

A: We will make ourselves available to help you with questions. We encourage you to look at the information available at www.medicare.gov or call one of us:

- Rhonda Attridge, CHS Technician, 1-800-628-5720, ext. 1648, or 541-444-9648
- Angela Ramirez, Elders Program Coordinator, 1-800-922-1399, ext. 1225, or 541-444-8225
- Beverly Baumgardt, Medical Support Supervisor, 1-800-648-0449, ext. 1635, or 541-444-9635

Toothtalk

by Mary Ellen Volansky, RDH, MS

"Perfect Teeth"

A few patients have told me they would prefer dentures to having their own teeth. Some even have asked a dentist to pull all their teeth. The reason they give for wanting false teeth has been that they don't like the looks of their natural teeth.

Most often a patient will ask to have a tooth or teeth pulled so they can be out of pain. This is understandable, especially if the tooth cannot be treated and saved.

Pain can occur in the form of a toothache, abscess, or trauma. Dentures have been utilized since at least 700 B.C. Today, millions of people wear them.

The man on the Ripley's Museum billboard on Highway 20 from Philomath gives us an example of a smile without teeth. Dentures replace all the teeth in an arch, either all upper or all lower teeth.

A partial denture replaces most of the teeth in an arch. The more teeth a person has in his or her mouth, the more secure an appliance (denture or partial denture) will be.

Sometimes an appliance can be made that will "snap" onto a few remaining teeth. These snaps really look like small clothing snaps. They make the appliance more stable in the mouth, reducing movement when talking or eating. Implants can be utilized in the same way.

Chewing is part of the process of digestion. Thorough chewing of food makes for better digestion. As we chew, we break food up into smaller pieces, which mix with saliva. Digestion continues in our stomach once we swallow.

Part of our satisfaction with eating is the sensation of biting or chewing. This satisfaction is derived from the food as it moves against our teeth and palette, releasing its flavors. This sensation differs

with the types of food we eat. Expensive implants restore some of this physical pleasure of eating. A denture blocks it.

Our facial muscles help keep the denture in place. This muscular action keeps our facial muscles from becoming slack. Thus having teeth – natural or false – helps us stay looking our age.

Dentures usually need to be removed at night; this allows the gum tissue to heal. The gum tissue is not normally covered. You know what your skin looks like if you have a plastic Band-Aid on it – soft, lighter colored, sometimes irritated. So remember to take your denture(s) out, if not at night then for a few hours each day.

Dentures need brushing at least daily. Flossed? No. All oral appliances collect plaque, calculus/tartar, and stain. These can lead to buildup, just like natural teeth, and the stain can become permanent. Chemical soaking solutions are available to aid cleaning. Do not use bleach; do not use very hot water. Special brushes also are available.

It takes practice to learn to talk and chew if you have appliances in your mouth. This practice has to do with learning to hold the appliance in place and with placing your tongue against a new object for talking.

Dental appliances do not always fit perfectly in the beginning and minor adjustments can be made. It's important to return to the dental office for any adjustments. The sooner the appliance is adjusted, the better it will fit and the more comfortable it will feel.

As an appliance is worn, the bone it sits on may change. Adjustments made in the dental office can correct this too. Sometimes a new plastic lining is placed.

Appliances can break if they are dropped; lay a soft towel in the sink to cushion the landing. Dogs like to chew dentures; I can't help you much with this.

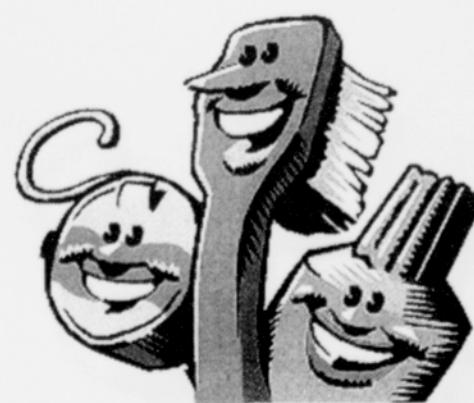
The remaining oral tissues (jaw, palette, gum tissues, uvula, cheeks, lips) need to be checked by a dental professional. Even without teeth, you should get an oral cancer screening annually. We check for color and texture changes, which could mean that other health changes are going on in the mouth or your body that may need further examination.

If you do not have a choice about whether to have a denture or partial denture, these appliances are an appreciated option. Each time you clean your teeth, false or natural, you are demonstrating courage as you work to keep your teeth and your body healthy. Visiting the dental office or medical office are important actions for everyone's health care program.

The Nee-Dash is over. Winter is here, bringing the light of longer days. From the Siletz Community Dental Clinic, may you have a happy and healthy New Year.

Summarized from the American Dental Association Web page on Denture Care, 2005

G	H	U	Z	M	I	L	K	F	O	S
F	L	U	O	R	I	D	E	V	P	D
L	E	Y	O	G	R	O	W	A	O	X
O	P	E	N	W	I	D	E	A	L	Y
S	E	A	L	A	N	T	S	N	I	L
S	M	I	L	E	B	I	G	I	S	I
H	T	O	O	T	H	C	E	S	H	T
O	Y	P	A	S	T	R	E	A	Z	O
L	S	U	G	A	R	F	A	R	E	L
D	A	I	L	Y	R	H	E	A	D	G
E	A	R	R	O	E	S	T	A	R	S
R	P	I	N	K	G	U	M	S	S	T
B	I	B	D	W	A	T	E	R	O	I
I	I	N	T	E	L	R	I	N	S	N
B	R	U	S	H	L	A	P	P	L	E
H	Y	G	I	E	N	I	S	T	M	S



Circle the words* that are about oral health; find:

APPLE	BRUSH	BIB	DAILY
FLOSSHOLDER	FLUORIDE	GHU	MILK
GROW	HEAD START	HYGIENIST	XYLITOL
OPEN WIDE	PINK GUMS	POLISH	SUGARFREE
RINSE	SEALANT	SMILE	TOOTHPASTE
VARNISH	WATER		

*Do you know what each word means? If you don't, bring the word with you when you visit the dental office. We will explain.