



National Institute of Dental  
and Craniofacial Research

# Finding Low-Cost Dental Care



The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR), one of the federal government's National Institutes of Health (NIH), leads the nation in conducting and supporting research to improve oral health. As a research organization, NIDCR does not provide financial assistance for dental treatment. The resources listed below, however, may help you find the dental care you need. You also can contact the NIDCR's National Oral Health Information Clearinghouse at 1-866-232-4528 or [nidcrinfo@mail.nih.gov](mailto:nidcrinfo@mail.nih.gov) if you have questions or need additional information.

Note: Some of the resources offer an internet address but no phone number. If you do not have internet access, you may wish to call the NIDCR toll-free number (listed above), visit your local library, or ask a friend or family member for help.

## CLINICAL TRIALS

NIDCR sometimes seeks volunteers with specific dental, oral, and craniofacial conditions to participate in research studies, also known as clinical trials. Researchers may provide study participants with limited free or low-cost dental treatment for the particular condition they are studying. To learn more about clinical trials, visit the NIDCR web site at [www.nidcr.nih.gov](http://www.nidcr.nih.gov) and click on "Clinical Trials." To find a clinical trial, contact:

- ClinicalTrials.gov ([www.clinicaltrials.gov](http://www.clinicaltrials.gov)) —a database of government and private clinical trials in the United States and around the world.
- NIH Clinical Research Studies (<http://clinicalstudies.info.nih.gov/>) —a database of clinical trials at the NIH Clinical Center in Bethesda, Maryland; to talk with someone about studies at the Clinical Center, call: 1-800-411-1222.

## DENTAL SCHOOLS AND DENTAL HYGIENE SCHOOLS

Dental schools can be a good source of quality, reduced-cost dental treatment. Most of these teaching facilities have clinics that allow dental students to gain experience treating patients while providing care at a reduced cost. Experienced, licensed dentists closely supervise the students. At most schools, there are also clinics where graduate students and faculty members provide care.

Dental hygiene schools may offer supervised, low-cost preventive dental care as part of the training experience for dental hygiene students. To find a dental or dental hygiene school in your area, contact:

- Dental Schools—American Dental Association ([www.ada.org/en/coda/find-a-program/search-dental-programs/dds-dmd-programs](http://www.ada.org/en/coda/find-a-program/search-dental-programs/dds-dmd-programs)).
- Dental Hygiene Schools—American Dental Hygienists' Association ([www.adha.org/dental-hygiene-programs](http://www.adha.org/dental-hygiene-programs)).

## COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

The federal government's Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), runs federally funded community health centers across the country that provide free or reduced-cost health services, including dental care. To find a health center in your area, visit:

- HRSA.gov ([www.hrsa.gov](http://www.hrsa.gov)) and type your location in the "Find a Health Center" box.

## MEDICAID AND CHIP

- Medicaid is a state-run program that provides medical benefits – and in some cases dental benefits – to eligible individuals and families. States are required to provide dental benefits for children covered by Medicaid, but states can choose whether to provide dental benefits for adults. Most states provide only limited dental services for adults, while some offer extensive services. Visit the Medicaid website ([www.medicaid.gov](http://www.medicaid.gov)) and click on "Learn How to Apply for Coverage" or contact your state Medicaid program ([www.medicaid.gov/medicaid-chip-program-information/by-state/by-state.html](http://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid-chip-program-information/by-state/by-state.html)).
- CHIP is a state-run program for children whose families earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but can't afford private insurance. CHIP provides dental services to children up to age 19. Dental services covered under this program vary from state to state. To find children's dental care programs in your state, visit Insure Kids Now ([www.insurekidsnow.gov/state/](http://www.insurekidsnow.gov/state/)) or call 1-877-KIDS-NOW (1-877-543-7669)

## MEDICARE

- Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people 65 and older and for people under 65 with specific disabilities. Medicare only covers dental services related to certain medical conditions or treatments. It does not cover dentures or most routine care like checkups, cleanings, or fillings. Visit Medicare Dental Services ([www.medicare.gov/coverage/dental-services.html](http://www.medicare.gov/coverage/dental-services.html)) or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). Have your Medicare number handy when you call.

## STATE AND LOCAL RESOURCES

Your state or local health department may know of programs in your area that offer free or reduced-cost dental care. To find state and local resources:

- Call your local or state health department to learn more about their financial assistance programs.
- Call 2-1-1 to find services in your area.

## UNITED WAY

The United Way may be able to direct you to free or reduced-cost dental services in your community. To find the United Way in your area, visit:

- United Way ([www.unitedway.org](http://www.unitedway.org)) and type your zip code in the top right box next to "Find Your United Way."

For additional copies of this fact sheet contact:

National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research  
National Oral Health Information Clearinghouse  
1 NOHIC Way  
Bethesda, Maryland 20892-3500  
1-866-232-4528  
[www.nidcr.nih.gov](http://www.nidcr.nih.gov)

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