



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Is Your Toothbrush Making You Sick? *Tips from Delta Dental to keep you healthy*

Ankeny, IA (Dec. 7, 2009) – With the cold and flu season in full swing, everyone is looking for ways to prevent the spread of germs. We all know that we should cover our mouth when we sneeze and that hand washing is important but another important defense against cold and flu germs is keeping your toothbrush clean.

Dr. Ed Schooley, dental director for Delta Dental of Iowa, offers the following tips on how you can make sure your toothbrush doesn't contribute to the spread of germs this cold and flu season.

1. Replace your toothbrush every four months because it wears out and doesn't clean as effectively once the bristles become worn. If you do get sick, you should replace your toothbrush right away. Remember, the flu can be contagious from one to seven days later so be sure to replace your toothbrush after you are feeling better.
2. Sterilize your toothbrush weekly. You can do this with a toothbrush sterilizer purchased from most drug stores. Another option is to sterilize your brush in the microwave for one minute or run your toothbrush through the dishwasher.
3. Keep your toothbrush away from other toothbrushes. Airborne bacteria can be shared between toothbrushes stored near each other in warm, moist environments like the bathroom.
4. Avoid cross-contamination of germs by giving each family member their own tube of toothpaste and try to use an individual travel-size tube of toothpaste when someone is sick.
5. Wash your hands before and after brushing. Anytime your hands are near your mouth, they can transfer bacteria.

With these tips, you can help prevent the spread of cold and flu germs. For more information on your oral health, go to www.deltadentalia.com.

Delta Dental of Iowa is the largest and most experienced provider of dental benefits in the state. As a not-for-profit, Delta Dental of Iowa invests in oral health projects through the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation that focus on access to care, prevention, education and research. The Iowa company is a member of the Delta Dental Plans Association, a national organization of not-for-profit Delta Dental plans. The national association is the largest dental benefits carrier in the nation providing coverage to 54 million people in more than 89,000 employer groups.

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