

Benefits Spotlight

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Your Guide To The First Tooth Fairy Visit

It's wiggly. It's wobbly. Yep, your 6-year-old's first baby tooth is ready to come out any day now. Do you know what to do when the time comes? Here's the why, when and how of this major milestone.

Why They Wiggle

Kids typically get their first baby tooth when they're around 6 months old. All 20 baby teeth are usually in by age 3, but they don't stick around long. By age 6, permanent teeth start to make their presence known beneath the gums. As those teeth start to move, the roots of the baby teeth slowly dissolve, loosening teeth from the gums.

- The Tooth Fairy Left \$255 Million for lost teeth in 2014*
- 88% of children received cash from the Tooth Fairy*
- In 32% of homes, Dad assisted the Tooth Fairy

When to Pull - And When Not To

Though it can be tempting to pull the loose tooth rather than risk your child swallowing it, pulling is not always the answer. If the tooth is only slightly loose, not enough of the root has dissolved. Don't pull it. If the tooth is very loose but won't quite come out, you can take a tissue or piece of gauze, grasp the tooth firmly and give it a quick twist.

How to Greet the Tooth Fairy

Your child is probably already excited to experience a little Tooth Fairy magic. You can make it even more of an event with some extra touches. Consider buying or sewing a special pillow with a pocket for a special tooth, or crafting a personalized box. Be creative, and above all else, have fun with it!

Take the Opportunity to Talk

Let's face it, kids can get tired of constant reminders to brush and floss. Use the Tooth Fairy to make the same points, and oral health suddenly becomes a lot more interesting. Have a discussion with your child about how the Tooth Fairy likes to find shiny, cavity-free teeth under the pillow. Mention, if you wish, that she saves her best gifts for healthy teeth. You might also consider having the Tooth Fairy leave a letter about your child's good oral health habits. A little praise goes a long way! For free, customizable correspondence from the Tooth Fairy, including letters and a certificate, visit OriginalToothFairyPoll.com.

Whether she brings money, a letter, toys or a toothbrush, don't miss the opportunity to use the Tooth Fairy's magic to your advantage. With just a sprinkling of fairy dust, she may be able to get your kids to brush and floss – happily! **To learn more about the Tooth Fairy, visit OriginalToothFairyPoll.com.**

** Delta Dental 2014 Original Tooth Fairy Poll*

Brushing Up

Ever wonder what your dentist is really thinking? We wanted to find out, too, so we talked to Delta Dental network dentist Dr. Andrew Greenberger of Periodontics and Implantology Associates, PC in Linden and West Orange, New Jersey.

What's the best dental advice you've ever received?

As a patient, the best advice I've ever heard is to keep up with routine care. Routine maintenance will get you a long way! As a professional, the best pearl of wisdom I've received is to always be honest and treat your patients like family.

Any funny stories from the dental chair?

The funniest thing I ever heard was when a patient told me he sneezed and his tooth fell out – right onto the streets of New York.

Do you have any fillings?

Of course. I grew up in the '60s! However, my children have no fillings and they're in their 20s.

If you could tell patients to stop doing one thing, what would it be?

Stop neglecting to use your dental benefits! So many people wait until they have big problems to go to the dentist and don't use their insurance for things like cleanings and exams. Then they run into trouble on down the line for not keeping up with simple preventive care. Also, stay in a good routine. If you're in the habit of brushing and flossing regularly, you're bound to have better oral health.