TOPICAL FLUORIDE THERAPY BENEFICIAL FOLLOWING PERIODONTAL SURGERY

Protecting vulnerable teeth following periodontal surgery helps defend against root caries and their associated physical and economic long-term costs. That’s why Delta Dental recommends that patients who have had periodontal surgery receive a topical fluoride treatment (preferably fluoride varnish) twice per benefit period in conjunction with periodontal maintenance therapy.

Periodontal diseases generally require professional intervention. While this intervention is an important step in slowing or reversing the progression of periodontal disease, it may also leave the affected teeth with exposed root surfaces. These exposed surfaces are susceptible to dental decay.

Studies have shown that people who have had treatment for advanced periodontal disease are at an increased risk for developing root caries. Delta Dental’s study of its own claims data, conducted through the Dental Data and Analysis Center (DAC), indicates that people who have had periodontal surgery are at a significantly higher risk for developing root caries. Looking at more than 42,000 patients, ages 20 to 80+ following periodontal surgery, DAC researchers found that on average these individuals developed 39 percent more root caries within seven years when compared to similar populations who didn’t have periodontal surgery. Surprisingly, similar results were found among younger populations, with patients aged 20-29 developing 50 percent more root caries and ages 30-39 developing 34 percent more when compared to non-surgical patients.

Topical fluoride has been proven effective at reducing caries formation on root surfaces in a number of studies. Combining the proven effectiveness of topical fluoride with the increased risk for developing root cavities following periodontal surgery, is a rational approach to improving health.

Delta Dental’s knowledgeable sales staff can help you implement these recommendations. Modernizing dental benefits to reflect our current knowledge of the best science is one of the ways Delta Dental helps employers manage the health of their employees and employees’ families. Appropriately providing preventive topical fluoride treatment to at-risk individuals who have had periodontal surgery is one way of improving health.

---