



## The Tooth Fairy Placed Higher Value on Teeth in 2013

The Tooth Fairy was a lot more generous in 2013 than in 2012, with the going rate for a lost baby tooth rising more than 44 percent from 2012 levels.

The average gift for a lost baby tooth last year was \$3.50, up \$1.08 from the prior year according to The Original Tooth Fairy Poll® sponsored by Delta Dental Plans Association.<sup>1</sup> More than 40 percent of the time, the lost-tooth gift was \$1.

But when it comes to gifts for losing the first tooth, the Tooth Fairy loosened her purse strings even more. According to the poll, 59 percent of parents reported leaving more money for the first tooth. On average, the amount given for the first tooth was \$4.51. This is a 29 percent increase from last year.

And who is the Tooth Fairy's first assistant? It is mom. Six in 10 caregivers say the child's mother assists the Tooth Fairy, compared to 35 percent that say the father assists the Tooth Fairy.

"Northeast Delta Dental encourages parents to speak with their children about the Tooth Fairy's visits as a way to discuss good oral health," said Manager of Community Relations, Crystal Carroll.

### Waiting versus pulling the first tooth

About half of parents surveyed, 54 percent, say their child waited for the first tooth to fall out on its own. Other children were less patient. Twenty-two percent could not contain their excitement and pulled their own tooth out, while 16 percent had a parent pull the tooth.

No matter how the tooth comes out, 15 percent of parents report their child lost a tooth while at school. Another 13 percent report the tooth was lost while eating.

### Tooth Fairy as teaching tool

In 2013, the Tooth Fairy visited 86 percent of U.S. homes with children who lost a tooth. Northeast Delta Dental suggests the

following ways parents can use the Tooth Fairy as a way to teach kids about good oral health habits:

- **Introduce the Tooth Fairy early on.** Kids will start losing baby teeth around age six. Before this age, parents can teach kids about the Tooth Fairy and let them know that good oral health habits and healthy teeth make her happy. Use this as an opportunity to brush up on a child's everyday dental routine. Kids not wanting to brush and floss? Remind them that the Tooth Fairy is only looking for healthy baby teeth, not teeth with cavities. This will help get kids excited about taking care of their teeth.
- **Leave a note reinforcing good habits.** A personalized note from the Tooth Fairy could be nearly as exciting for kids as the gift itself. Parents should include tips for important oral health habits that the Tooth Fairy wants kids to practice, such as brushing twice a day, flossing once a day and visiting the dentist twice a year. And, of course, parents should give the Tooth Fairy a special name.
- **Give oral health gifts.** Although the Tooth Fairy left cash for kids in 99 percent of homes she visited, a few children received toys, gum, or other gifts. Consider forgoing cash and reinforce good oral health habits by providing a new toothbrush with their favorite cartoon character or fun-flavored toothpaste. How about a new book? There are several children's books about Tooth Fairy adventures that can add to the Tooth Fairy excitement. But if the family tradition has always included money, you don't have to stop. Consider giving both cash and a new toothbrush to reinforce good oral health habits.

For more information and ways to make your child's Tooth Fairy experience extra special, visit [www.theoriginaltoothfairy.com](http://www.theoriginaltoothfairy.com).

<sup>1</sup>Morpace, Inc. conducted The Original Tooth Fairy Poll® on behalf of Delta Dental with 1,001 consumers across the United States.