

Special Health Care Needs benefit



What is the purpose of the Special Health Care Needs benefit?

For the nearly 6.5 million people in the U.S. with intellectual or developmental disabilities, oral health care can be inaccessible or overwhelming.

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry defines special health care needs as any physical, developmental, mental, sensory, behavioral, cognitive, emotional impairment or limiting condition that requires medical management, health care intervention, and/or the use of specialized services or programs. The condition may be congenital, developmental, or acquired through disease, trauma, or environmental cause, and may impose limitations in performing daily activities. Individuals who fall into these categories often require extra care.

Delta Dental believes that everyone deserves a healthy smile and access to proper oral health care.

Who qualifies?

Covered members with a special health care need such as any physical, developmental, mental, sensory, behavioral, cognitive, emotional impairment or limiting condition that requires medical management, health care intervention, and/or the use of specialized services or programs. Individuals who fall into these categories often require extra care when they visit the dentist. All covered members with a special health care need are eligible for this benefit.

Is there an age limit to receive this benefit?

There is no age limit.

At what point is an individual's benefit active for Special Health Care Needs?

A member's benefit is active from the date that their dental provider attests to the Special Health Care Needs program on the PreViser Clinical Suite. Benefits for that covered member will be visible on benefit lookup the day following the attestation submission.

What is included in this benefit?

- Additional exam benefits are included for extra consultations with the dentist that may be necessary to help patients understand what to expect before treatment.
- Up to four cleanings in a 12-month period.
- Treatment delivery modifications, including anesthesia, that are necessary for dental staff to provide oral health care for patients with sensory sensitivities, behavioral challenges, severe anxiety, or other barriers to treatment.

What are the oral health conditions often associated with special health care needs patients?

- buildup of calculus resulting in increased gingivitis and risk for periodontal disease
- thin or missing enamel
- dental caries
- crowding of teeth
- anomalies in tooth development, size, shape, eruption, and arch formation
- patients with special health care needs generally require more frequent dental visits and special accommodations in the delivery of care



How does a member use this benefit?

Covered members need to let their dentist know that their Delta Dental group plan includes the Special Health Care Needs benefit and that they have a special health care need. The Dentist should verify the benefit before rendering services. Delta Dental created rules to allow for additional benefits for members with special health care needs. We recommend that the member take the [Special Health Care Needs Benefit – Dentist Instructions](#) flyer to their dental visit.