



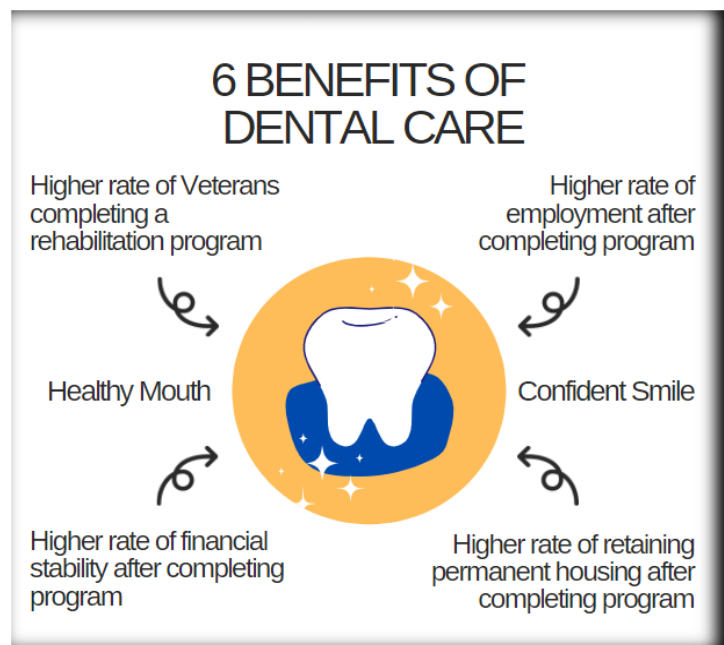
# HOMELESS VETERANS DENTAL PROGRAM (HVDP)

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Veterans must be eligible for, and enrolled in, VA healthcare.
- Veterans must be enrolled in one of the residential programs listed here for at least **60 days**.
- Veterans are eligible for one course of treatment (or episode) of limited dental care, which may include examinations, x-rays, cleanings, oral hygiene instructions, fillings, extractions and partial or full dentures.
- Once the entire episode of dental care is complete, the Veteran is responsible for maintaining continued dental care at their own cost. However, if a Veteran re-enrolls in an eligible program in the future, they may receive another episode of dental care.
- Veterans who are 100% service connected (or paid at the 100% rate) are eligible for comprehensive dental care regardless of their enrollment in eligible programs.

The HVDP promotes oral health for all Veterans that have faced, or are at risk for, homelessness. Veterans who are enrolled in the following **residential rehabilitation** programs may be eligible for dental care.

- Grant and Per Diem Program
- Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program
- Domiciliary Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs
- Compensated Work Therapy-Transitional Residence
- Community Residential Care and Medical Foster Home Programs





## COMMON ORAL HEALTH CONCERNS

- Poor oral health can cause pain, infection, tooth loss, difficulty eating, and decreased self-confidence.
- **Tooth decay** is the destruction the hard layers of your teeth causing holes or *cavities*. When you eat or drink foods containing sugars, the bacteria in the mouth can produce acids that attack tooth enamel.
- The bacteria live in **plaque** – the soft, sticky film that builds up on the teeth. Plaque build-up also leads to the inflammation of the gums. This inflammation, called gingivitis can lead to advanced **gum disease** (or periodontitis).
- If you have **swollen gums or bleeding** while brushing and flossing, you may have gum disease. Other symptoms include persistent bad breath, loose teeth, and gums pulling away from the teeth, causing the teeth to look longer than before.
- If plaque is not removed regularly by tooth brushing and flossing, it hardens to create calculus (also known as tartar). **Calculus** cannot be removed with a toothbrush or floss; only a dental professional can remove it during an oral cleaning.
- **Tobacco and vaping** increase the risk of gum disease and oral cancer. If you use tobacco, seek help to stop. Talk to your doctor or call a help line. 1- 800-QUIT-NOW is a good resource.
- Many medications can cause **dry mouth**, which increases your risk of cavities and gum disease. You can increase saliva production by using sugarless gum or candy or using saliva simulating products. Drinking water and using saliva substitutes can also help maintain a moist mouth.
- **Diet and nutrition** affect the tissues in the mouth; and the health of the mouth affects how well nutrients are used by the body. A nutritious, balanced diet helps keep the mouth healthy.

Tell your dental team about any concerns or questions you might have about your oral health.

## HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR TEETH



**BRUSH TWICE A DAY**

\*with a soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste



**FLOSS DAILY**

\*to reduce bacteria between teeth



**FOR FRESH BREATH AND EXTRA CAVITY PROTECTION**

\*you can add an alcohol-free, fluoride mouthwash

A healthy smile will improve your chances of success.

**MAKE YOUR DENTAL HEALTH A PRIORITY!**

### CONTACT US:

Persons wishing to obtain information regarding the Homeless Veterans Dental Program in their area should contact their nearest VA hospital and ask for the homeless coordinator's office.

**Phone:** 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838)

**Email:** Homelessvets@va.gov

**Web:** <https://www.va.gov/homeless/dental.asp>

**Dental Benefits for Veterans FAQ Sheet:**

[https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/publications/IB10-442\\_dental\\_benefits\\_for\\_veterans.pdf](https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/publications/IB10-442_dental_benefits_for_veterans.pdf)