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Is the Tooth Fairy Becoming More Generous? Annual Poll Shows Increase of 12.4%
Securian Dental's poll also reveals children's dental habits

EAGAN, Minn. (May 16, 2006) – The 2006 annual Tooth Fairy poll from Securian Dental reports that the current average “gift” U.S. children receive from the Tooth Fairy increased to \$2. This average is 22 cents higher than the figure reported in last year’s poll—a 12.4% increase.

“This upswing is actually greater than the directional pattern exhibited in some commonplace indices,” said Marty Weiland, a research analyst for Securian Dental plans. “The NASDAQ and Dow Jones Industrial Average indices increased 11.2% and 1.83% over this same time period, respectively.”

Tooth Fairy gift amounts range from a low of 25 cents to a high of \$25 per tooth.

BRUSHING UP

“The Tooth Fairy is a rite of passage in many American households and presents a great opportunity for parents to talk with their children about practicing good dental health habits,” continued Dr. Hastreiter. “Re-establishing good dental habits at home, combined with regular dental visits will help children create healthy teeth for a lifetime.”

According to Securian Dental’s poll, which goes out to a sampling of its commercially insured population, 74 percent of parents report that their children brush their teeth twice per day. In addition, 91 percent of parents surveyed state their children receive a dental exam every six months. Parents also report that children typically have their first visit to the dentist between the ages of one and four.

“The American Dental Association recommends that parents take their children to the dentist by age one for their first dental health assessment,” said Dr. Richard Hastreiter, vice president of oral health analytics and dental director for Securian Dental. “It is important for parents to know that the frequency of dental visits needs to be determined by the dentist, based on an assessment of the child’s unique oral health needs — rather than on a pre-set schedule. This approach ensures your child receives the most appropriate, timely care.”

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SWEET TOOTH

The poll also revealed that 44 percent of parents indicate that their children consume an average of three or more sugar drinks and/or treats per day. “Children can be taught from an early age to eat an orally healthy and nutritious diet,” says Dr. Hastreiter. “Encourage your children to make healthy choices. Teach them to eat a balanced diet and limit in-between meal snacks of foods containing high levels of sugar. This will help promote good dental health as well as overall health.”

Dr. Hastreiter offers the following tips for parents with young children:

Dental Hygiene: Set a good example for children by practicing good oral hygiene

- ❑ Brush and floss daily. Help children learn proper daily brushing and flossing techniques.
- ❑ Involve children in the selection of the type of toothbrush, dental floss and fluoride toothpaste they use. The more involved, the more likely they will form lasting good oral health habits. Select toothbrushes, dental floss and fluoride toothpastes that have the American Dental Association Seal of Acceptance.
- ❑ Replace toothbrushes when the bristles bend or look worn — about every three to four months. Children’s brushes often have to be replaced more frequently.

Nutritious Choices: Help children establish healthy habits

- ❑ Encourage children to make healthy choices by eating a balanced diet and limiting in-between meal snacks of foods containing high levels of sugar.
- ❑ Offer water instead of soft drinks or sugary liquids.
- ❑ Make sure children drink fluoridated water. Bottled or purified water may not have enough fluoride.
- ❑ Check to see if your school is one of the many schools that now include healthier vending machine options.

Dentist Visits: Schedule children’s check-ups with the dentist as needed

- ❑ Schedule a dentist visit by your child’s first birthday.
- ❑ Ask the dentist if your child would benefit from sealants, a plastic coating for the top of back teeth to help prevent decay.
- ❑ Teach children that a mouthguard is priority equipment for participating in any sport that could result in a knocked-out or fractured tooth.
- ❑ Expectant mothers: Visit the dentist for a checkup if you are planning to become pregnant or as soon as you find out you are pregnant. Be sure to tell your dentist if you are pregnant, so that your dentist is aware of your pregnancy before providing treatment or using any medications or x-rays.

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With a 35-year track record of proven success, the DeCare Dental family of companies is a leading dental benefits management group that oversees almost \$1 billion in managed revenues, serving 3.7 million individuals in more than 18,000 employer groups including Fortune 500 corporations, small businesses, non-profits and government entities in the United States and overseas. Through its affiliates and partners, it is active in all major markets across the United States and has also expanded its operations into Europe. As a company focused on global leadership in oral health care management, DeCare Dental sets the standard for innovation, quality, service and results.

For more information on Securian Dental Plans, visit www.securiandental.com or call (toll-free) 866-222-6507.

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