

Need A Dental Procedure? Make a Plan!

The secret to a successful dental procedure is to plan ahead! Work closely with your **dentist** and your **Hemophilia Treatment Center (HTC)** to coordinate your care prior to and after the procedure.

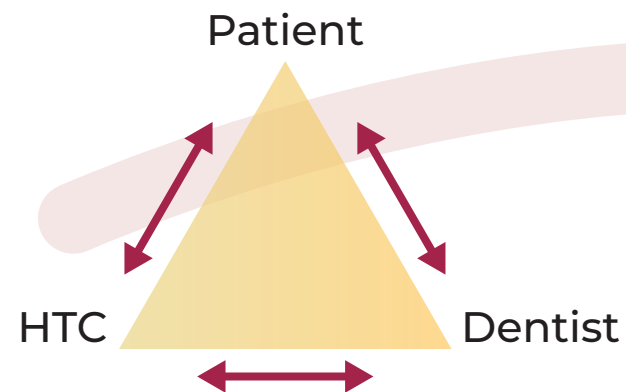
Steps to take:

- 1 Provide your dentist with your HTC's contact information
- 2 After your initial dental visit contact your HTC team and provide them with the dentist's contact information, type of procedure, time and date of the appointment, and the medication and supplies you have on hand. They will ask additional questions as needed
- 3 Your HTC will provide you and your dentist with a recommended treatment plan.

Helpful scheduling tips:

Unless it's an emergency, schedule the procedure 2-3 weeks in advance and after 11:00 am so that you have time to obtain your medications and treat before the appointment.

Schedule your appointments for Monday-Thursday (if possible). This gives your HTC time to help you before the weekend if you have unexpected bleeding.



Remember!

Healthy gums are less likely to bleed. You have the **POWER** to make your gums, teeth, and whole mouth healthy.

For more information or other dental questions, please call
Jill Foley, Cascade's dental hygienist, at: 734-996-3300.
She would love to talk with you.



Jill Foley, RDH, BSN, RN



A Message from Colleen Joiner, LMSW



Colleen Joiner, LMSW, CCM

Dear Readers,

From an early age, most of us are taught the importance of brushing and flossing to protect our teeth for years to come. As parents, many of us have also faced the daily challenge of helping our children build consistent oral hygiene habits. Despite this early foundation, dental care is often taken for granted even as we age. For individuals living with chronic illness, dental appointments may feel especially overwhelming; or simply fall to the bottom of the priority list. Fear or discomfort related to bleeding while brushing and flossing can also make it difficult to maintain regular oral care.

This newsletter is dedicated to changing that narrative by providing you with clear, trustworthy information to help better understand oral health and its essential role in overall well-being. I sat down with Cascade's registered dental hygienist, Jill Foley, to discuss the best way to keep your mouth and teeth healthy and your smile bright. We'll explore how bacteria and sugar affect both the mouth and the body and share practical guidance to help make dental procedures less stressful and more manageable when they're necessary. Our goal is to reduce anxiety and support lifelong care for a healthy smile.

Colleen

Does a Lack of Dental Insurance Bring You Down? There May Be Help!

Cascade provides funding to hemophilia foundations in our region to administer a high-quality Delta Dental program for members of the bleeding disorder community.

- ✓ You have a bleeding disorder or are a symptomatic carrier (Family members without a bleeding disorder are also eligible in Ohio only)
- ✓ You have no dental insurance or inadequate dental insurance (in special cases)
- ✓ You are a resident of Michigan, Ohio, or Indiana
- ✓ You agree to USE the insurance within the year

Low cost or **no costs** premiums and requirements vary in each state.

Michigan Residents

Call Dana Brendecke-Carrier at the Hemophilia Foundation of Michigan at 734-544-0015 or dbrendeckecarrier@hfmich.org.

For a paper application, go to:

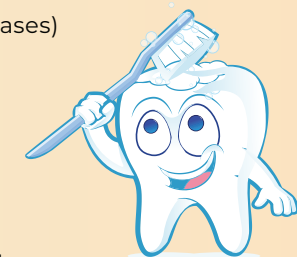
hfmich.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/2026-HFM-Dental-Plan-Application.pdf

Ohio Residents

Call Liz Brett at 216-834-0051 or liz@gobdf.org.

Indiana Residents

Call Angel DiRuzza at Hemophilia of Indiana, Inc. at 317-570-0039 or adiruzza@hoii.org.



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Love Your Smile: Easy Habits for Strong, Healthy Teeth

Floss Like a Boss!

Take a look inside your mouth. What colors do you see? White, yellow, pink, or red? Your gums appear pink or red because they are rich in blood vessels. These blood vessels deliver oxygen and nutrients, help fight infections, and promote healing. However, having so many blood vessels also means there is a greater chance of bleeding in the mouth.

If your gums bleed when you brush or floss, you might think you should stop or at least take a break. **But here's the surprise:** bleeding gums often mean you are **not brushing or flossing well enough**.

Inconsistent oral (mouth) care allows plaque and bacteria to build up, which can cause bleeding in people **with or without a bleeding disorder**. It's surprising to know that for most people who have a bleeding disorder, the bleeding is **not caused by the bleeding disorder itself**, but by inflammation of the gums otherwise known as gingivitis.

Who's most likely to say,
"My gums bleed."?



(Devine Dental Care, 2025)



(Infodentis, n.d.)

Bacteria: The Mouth-Body Connection

Your mouth is home to over **700 species of bacteria**, living in a sticky layer called **biofilm**, commonly known as plaque, that clings to your teeth. Some bacteria are helpful, but others can cause harm.

When plaque builds up along the gum line, it causes the gums to become swollen and inflamed. The swelling signals the body to send more blood to the area to fight the bacteria. As blood flow increases, the blood vessels become fragile and may break easily, leading to bleeding gums.



When Blood Vessels Break

- ✓ Blood escapes into the mouth.
- ✓ **Bacteria can enter the bloodstream** and travel to other parts of the body.

For many years, research has shown that poor oral health can act as a **gateway to other diseases throughout the body**, including:

Brain:

Stroke, Alzheimer's disease, brain infections

Cardiovascular System:

Heart valve infections, heart disease, heart attacks

Joint Health:

Rheumatoid arthritis, artificial joint infections

Mouth:

Gum disease, oral cancer, oral infections

Pregnancy:

Low birth weight, pregnancy-related gingivitis

Respiratory System:

Pneumonia, lung abscess

Skin:

Skin ulcers and wounds

Sinuses:

Sinus infections

Reference: Human Oral Microbiome Database (HOMD)

There's a Picnic in Your Mouth!

Bacteria love sugar. When you eat or drink sugar, including sucrose, fructose, glucose, and refined starches, bacteria use it as fuel.

As bacteria digest sugar, they **produce acid as a waste product**. This acid can remain on your teeth for 20 minutes or more after each sugary snack or drink. While tooth enamel is strong, repeated acid exposure can pull important minerals (calcium and phosphate) out of the enamel—a process called **demineralization**. Over time, this leads to tooth decay.

This doesn't mean you must eliminate sugar completely. Instead, limit how often you eat sugary foods and focus on keeping harmful bacteria under control by brushing and flossing as recommended.

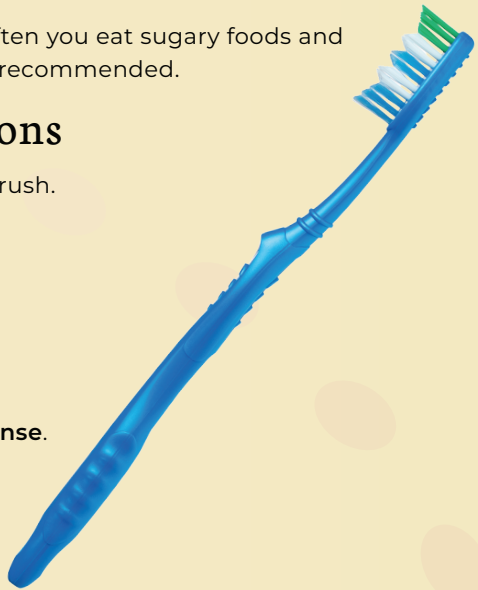
Oral Hygiene Recommendations

- ✓ Brush your teeth **twice daily** using a soft manual or powered toothbrush.
- ✓ Use **fluoride toothpaste** and brush for a full **2 minutes**.
- ✓ Clean between your teeth **daily** with floss or a water flosser.
- ✓ Eat a healthy diet and limit sugary snacks and drinks.
- ✓ If you are cavity-prone, use a **fluoride rinse after eating**.
- ✓ If your gums are bleeding, consider using an **antimicrobial mouth rinse**.
- ✓ Visit your dentist at least **twice a year** for regular cleanings.

If bleeding occurs after brushing or flossing:

- ◆ Rinse your mouth with **cold water** to help stop the bleeding.
- ◆ If bleeding continues to ooze for more than **two hours**, **contact your Hemophilia Treatment Center (HTC)**.
- ◆ **Do not stop brushing or flossing**. With regular plaque removal from a soft toothbrush and floss, gum bleeding usually improves within 1-2 weeks.

Reference: American Dental Association, 2024



Cascade Hemophilia Consortium

Mission Statement

To provide a compassionate and connected care partnership for individuals with bleeding disorders – delivering accessible, affordable, high-quality care while equipping patients and their families with the knowledge and support needed to manage their health with confidence.

Cascade... A Trusted Partner in Your Circle of Care

