

## What Does Medicare Cover For Dental?

Medicare doesn't cover most dental care, dental procedures, or supplies, like cleanings, fillings, tooth extractions, dentures, dental plates, or other dental devices. Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance) will pay for certain dental services that you get when you're in a hospital. Part A can pay for inpatient hospital care if you need to have emergency or complicated dental procedures, even though the dental care isn't covered.

Medicare will not cover dental care that you need primarily for the health of your teeth. For example, Medicare will not cover routine checkups, cleanings or pay for you to get fillings. Medicare will never pay for dentures. Even if Medicare has paid for you to have a teeth pulled (extracted) as preparation for a medical procedure, you will be responsible for the cost of your dentures.

**Note:** Some Medicare Advantage plans cover routine dental services. If you have a Medicare Advantage plan, check with your plan to see what dental services may be covered.

However, Medicare will cover some dental services if they are required to protect your general health, or you need dental care in order for another health service that Medicare covers to be successful.

Medicare will pay for dental services if, for example

- you receive an oral examination in the hospital because you will be having a kidney transplant or in a rural or federally qualified health clinic before a heart valve replacement;
- you have a disease that involves the jaw (like oral cancer) and need dental services that are necessary for radiation treatment;
- you had a facial tumor removed and had ridge reconstruction (reconstruction of part of the jaw) as part of that procedure;
- you need surgery to treat fractures of the jaw or face;
- you need dental splints and wiring as a result of jaw surgery.

While Medicare may pay for these initial dental services, Medicare will not pay for any more follow-up dental care after the underlying health condition has been treated. For example, if Medicare paid for a tooth to be removed (extracted) as part of surgery to repair a facial injury you got in a car accident, it will not pay for any other dental care you may need later because you had the tooth removed.

Medicare will pay for some dental-related hospitalizations, for example, if

- you develop an infection after having a tooth pulled;
- you require observation during a dental procedure because you have a health-threatening condition.

**Note:** Medicare will cover the costs of hospitalization (including room and board, anesthesia, and x-rays). It will not cover the dentist fee for treatment or fees for other physicians, such as radiologists or anesthesiologists.

While Medicare may pay for in-patient hospital care in these circumstances, Medicare will never cover any dental care specifically excluded from Original Medicare (i.e., dentures), even if you are in the hospital.

**Still have Medicare questions? Call the Medicare Rights Center's free national helpline at 800-333-4114.**