NEW YORK STATE | Medicaid

# What You Should Know About:
# Tooth Decay, Prevention, and You

## Be Your Own Health Advocate!

- **Your Medicaid benefits include dental coverage.**
- **Use your dental benefits to help you have a healthy mouth.**

**These Medicaid benefits can help you prevent tooth decay:**

- Routine **exams, x-rays**, and **cleanings**
- Supplemental fluoride, including:
  - A **prescription for fluoride** if you live in a non-fluoridated community
  - **Fluoride varnish** (painted on teeth to protect them from decay)
  - **Fluoride gel or foam** (put in a tray that is placed in the mouth for several minutes)
  - Silver diamine fluoride (painted on teeth to stop tooth decay)
- **Dental sealants** (a coating applied to the back teeth where decay often starts).

*If you have questions about using your benefits, call the phone number listed on your Medicaid card.*

## UNDERSTANDING TOOTH DECAY

### Did you know…?

- Tooth decay is caused by PLAQUE. Plaque is a soft, sticky layer of bacteria that can build up on teeth.
- Bacteria in your mouth feeds on sugar and creates acid. The acid breaks down the outer layer of the tooth. This causes tooth decay.
- Tooth decay can cause bad breath, pain, infection, and tooth loss.
- Tooth decay is the most common PREVENTABLE disease in America.

## PREVENTING TOOTH DECAY

### What can you do?

Get rid of PLAQUE! Brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.

Clean or floss between your teeth daily.

Visit your dentist regularly for routine exams, x-rays, and cleanings.

Discuss with your dentist:
- Supplemental fluoride to strengthen your teeth.
- Dental sealants to protect your teeth from decay.