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Where can I find low-cost dental care?

There are a variety of resources for dental care, including local health departments, medical insurance programs, dental schools, clinical trials and state and local resources.

Local Health Departments

The Bureau of Primary Health Care, a service of the [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) (1-888-Ask-HRSA), supports [federally-funded community health centers](#) across the country that provide free or reduced-cost health services, including dental care.

Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP

The [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#) (CMS) administers three important federally-funded programs: Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

- Medicare is a health insurance program for people who are 65 years and older or for people with specific disabilities. **Medicare [dental coverage](#) is limited;** it does not cover most routine dental care or dentures.
- Medicaid is a state-run program that provides medical benefits, and **in some cases** dental benefits, to eligible individuals and families. States set their own guidelines regarding who is eligible and what services are covered. Most states provide limited emergency dental services for people age 21 or over, while some offer comprehensive services. For most individuals under the age of 21, [dental services](#) are provided under Medicaid.
- CHIP helps children up to age 19 who are without health insurance. CHIP provides medical coverage and, **in most cases**, [dental services](#) to children who qualify. Dental services covered under this program vary from state to state.

[CMS](#) (1-800-MEDICARE) can provide detailed information about each of these programs and refer you to state programs where applicable.

Dental Schools

[Dental schools](#) (American Dental Association) can be a good source of quality, reduced-cost dental treatment. Most of these teaching facilities have clinics that allow dental students to gain experience treating patients while providing care at a reduced cost. Experienced, licensed dentists closely supervise the students. Post-graduate and faculty clinics are also available at most schools.

[Dental hygiene schools](#) (American Dental Hygienists' Association) may also offer supervised, low-cost preventive dental care as part of the training experience for dental hygienists.

Clinical Trials

The National Institutes of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) sometimes seeks volunteers with specific dental, oral, and craniofacial conditions to participate in research studies, also known as clinical trials. Researchers may provide study participants with limited free or low-cost dental treatment for the particular condition they are studying. To find out if there are any NIDCR clinical trials that you might fit into, go to "[NIDCR Studies Seeking Patients](#)." For a complete list of all federally funded clinical trials, visit [ClinicalTrials.gov](#). To see if you qualify for any clinical trials being conducted at our Bethesda, Maryland, campus, you can call the Clinical Center's Patient Recruitment and Public Liaison Office at 1-800-411-1222.

State and Local Resources

Your state or local health department may know of programs in your area that offer free or reduced-cost dental care. Call your local or state health department to learn more about their financial assistance programs. Check your local telephone book for the number to call.

United Way

The [United Way](#) may be able to direct you to free or reduced-cost dental services in your community. Local United Way chapters can be located on the United Way website.

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