

## **Dental Practices, Codes, and Patient Responsibility**

At Sincere Smiles, our goal is to provide our patients with leading edge dental technologies, the finest dental materials, and expert staff in a comfortable environment. In order to provide this quality of dental care, we request all our patients pay their estimated personal cost of treatment at the time of their visit.

As a courtesy to our patients, we will file your dental claims and bill your dental insurance company for the treatment you receive. However, in the event the insurance company for any reason does not pay the estimated portion of the bill, the balance will become the patient's responsibility. As an alternative, patients may opt to pay the entire cost of their treatment during the time of their visit, and subsequently bill their dental insurance independently, if preferred.

Patients are always responsible for knowing their own dental benefits, as there are thousands of unique dental plans with varying degrees of coverage. To empower patients with knowledge and the ability to verify their own coverage, the following are our main practice guidelines:

### Cleanings and Exams

We recommend—at a minimum—two cleanings per calendar year. Most patients may benefit from up to four cleanings per calendar year. The ADA codes for cleanings are D1110 and D1120, the latter for patients 14 or younger. If the patient has completed a deep cleaning previously, periodontal maintenance takes place of a standard cleaning (D4341).

Dental exams are paired with cleanings, to give patients time with Doctor to ask any dental questions or concerns, and/or learn more about their current dental health. New patients are billed for comprehensive exams (D0150), and returning patient exams are billed for periodic exams (D0120).

Emergency or problem-focused exams are ADA code D0140.

Fluoride treatment may also be available for cleanings and is billed as D1206.

### X-rays

X-rays are critical to diagnosing dental concerns. Many adverse conditions such as cavities, infections, or decay may occur either inside the tooth, or under the gumline. The bare human eye cannot see inside either. X-rays allow us to accurately assess your dental health, and we recommend one set every calendar year. Patients can decline x-rays upon written informed consent in-office.

For most patients over the age of eight, a full mouth series is taken for new patients, and once every five calendar years for existing patients (D0210). Once every calendar year, a set that consists of four bitewing x-rays and three PA x-rays is taken (D0274, D0220, D0230).

Typically, two PA x-rays (D0220, D0230) are taken during emergency or problem-focused visits. PA x-rays may also be taken as part of documenting and/or to support treatment provided in office.

### Treatment

We offer a range of restorative, periodontic, endodontic, extractive, and cosmetic treatments. For treatments that do not have a flat fee (such as Zoom teeth whitening), patients will be provided with a treatment plan and consulted. Of the total cost for treatment, an estimate will be provided based on the

information insurance companies make available to our front-office staff and their software, on what the insurance will *likely* pay—and what the remaining estimated patient portion is. That estimated patient portion is due at the time of treatment. The patient is never responsible for more than the total cost but is responsible for whatever the insurance doesn't cover of the total cost.

The only way to eliminate the possibility of insurance not covering their entire estimated portion is for the patient to pay for the entire treatment cost upfront and then bill their own insurance. Most patients opt not to do this. Even pre-authorizations are not guarantees from insurance companies, and often take weeks to process. Treatment plans include the specific ADA codes that would be billed.

Please note that our medical recommendations pertaining to your dental health and well-being do not always reconcile with the thousands of unique and varying dental insurance policies. For example, a procedure to save a decaying tooth may not be covered by your specific insurance. We will still make our necessary recommendation and offer our staff to consult with you on a financial course of action.

### Orthodontics

Your dental insurance company may allow a separate lifetime maximum, if any, for orthodontic treatment. They usually make payments on a quarterly, annual, or bi-annual basis, depending on your dental plan. Your dental plan needs to continue to be active at time of payment. If your insurance terminates prior to all payment, the dental insurance plan will not pay the remaining orthodontic benefits and the balance is ultimately the patient's responsibility. For specific quotes, we cannot guarantee the same fees, promotions, etc. after the expiration date. The ADA code for Invisalign is D8090.

### Appointment Policy

We pride ourselves in providing extra time for the personal attention each patient deserves. We respect your time and make every effort to keep you from waiting. We require at least 48 hours business day notice if you need to reschedule or cancel your appointment. We reserve the right to charge patients who do not reschedule or cancel with adequate notice, or who fail to keep their scheduled appointments, an appropriate cancellation fee (\$75/hour). If patients have a history of rescheduling or cancelling appointments without 48 hour business day notice, we reserve the right to require a non-refundable deposit or even refuse scheduling future appointments.

### Insurance Recommendations

Patients occasionally ask our staff for insurance carrier recommendations during open-enrollment season. Our office only accepts PPO dental insurance, as we cannot bill HMO dental insurance plans. As of January 2023, we are in-network with Cigna, Delta Dental, United Health Care, BlueShield, SunLife Financial, Aetna Extend, United Concordia, and the BlueCross 300 network.

You are always welcome to call our office and ask if we are in-network with your insurance carrier, and double check that your specific policy or future policy is included. We still accept PPO dental insurance policies that are not in-network.

**Please call or email our office with any questions related to our guidelines or patient responsibility. We are happy to help assist with your dental needs and welcome you to our patient community!**