



## PRAIRIE DENTAL GROUP NEWSLETTER

The weather is cold, snow has fallen, days are shorter, and the end of 2024 is approaching... fast! From all of us at Prairie Dental Group, we wish you a happy and healthy holiday season! Read ahead to learn about the latest news, announcements, and a lot of fun too!

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### Upcoming Dental Software Change

Starting Wednesday, February 19th, 2025, Prairie Dental Group will transition to a new dental management software system. We are excited to take this big step forward in the speed and efficiency of our processes, and there will be new features that will likely make our lives a little easier. Be prepared for a new type of correspondence from us, prior to your appointment. - SAME: We will still remind you (via email or text) of your upcoming appointment, and ask you to confirm your appointment, - NEW: We will also ask you to fill out new digital paperwork. Like switching from an Apple to an Android device, this new system will be different for all of our team members at PDG, and take a while to get used to. So, thank you in advance, for your patience and cooperation with this exciting transition!



## Can't Get In! The Ongoing Challenges for Scheduling Cleaning Appointments

You may have noticed that, lately, it has been difficult to schedule a cleaning appointment. If you hadn't pre-scheduled your next visit at your last cleaning appointment, you may have called our office to schedule and discovered that there is little-to-no availability for up to 8 months out! This is an unfortunate truth at our office right now, and across the dental [and medical] industry. More recently, there are just too many patients and not enough dental professionals to provide care in as timely of a manner as before.

Since March of 2020, many dental professionals have left the field; including dental assistants, administrative staff, and nearly 25% of dental hygienists! There also seems to have been an steady influx of people now wanting to take better care of their health and seeking dental care, even if they hadn't done so in the past.

For these reasons, we have been a bit 'stuck', trying to accommodate everyone as best as we can. We encourage our patients to pre-book their next hygiene visit, for the best opportunity to stay on-time with their visits. We also continue to seek qualified dental professionals to join our team. Rest assured; we are doing our very best with the resources we have to meet our patients' needs. As our patients' daily schedules change, so do our schedules. Our hard-working administrative team members are constantly reaching out to patients on our "Sooner If Possible" list. This way we can contact you if an appointment opens up short-notice. If you'd like to be contacted when an appointment comes available, text us at 952-903-5000 to confirm you're on the "Sooner If Possible" list.

The good news... yes there is good news! This problem is currently only affecting our hygiene schedules for cleaning appointments. Our dentists are still available for restorative and emergency treatment within a reasonable timeframe. As we approach the holiday season, all types of appointments fill up fast, as many folks want to utilize their remaining insurance benefits before the end of the year. So, if you've been thinking about making an appointment with your dentist, do so, sooner than later!

Thank you again for your patience!



## Office Hours Change

Starting in March 2025, Prairie Dental Group will no longer be offering Saturday appointments.



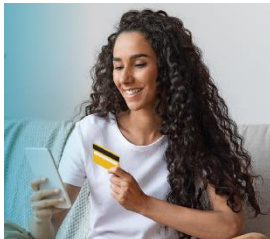
## E-Statements

Ready to reduce your snail mail? Prairie Dental Group can securely send your patient statement to your email and pay your bill online!

You can get set up for E-Statements in the following ways: 1) Let us know your email address at your next appointment. 2) Text "E-statements" + your email address to 952-903-50003) Opt-In yourself by going to [PrairieDental.com](http://PrairieDental.com), click on Pay Your Bill, sign up for full access, and select E-statement delivery as your preference.

Worried about your statement getting lost in junk mail? A paper statement will be mailed to you if your e-statement is not opened within about 7 days.

## OPT-IN TODAY!



## Auto Pay

Want to take away the worry and hassle of paying off small balances? Prairie Dental Group now offer Auto Pay! You can now securely keep your credit card on file to make it easy to pay. You choose your maximum threshold (ex. \$20) and if any bills fall below that amount, your card will simply be auto-charged and a confirmation receipt will be sent to your email.

Simply:

1. Go to [PrairieDental.com](http://PrairieDental.com)
2. Click on Pay Your Bill
3. Create an Account (aka "Sign Up for Full Access")

4. Select Manage Auto Pay
5. Fill out your terms and card information

**ENROLL TODAY!**

### Highlights of 2024 at PDG

This year was filled with a lot of teamwork, dentistry, and fun! From cowboy-themed staff meetings and escape room team building, to soccer games and ice cream socials, we sure made a lot of great memories worth sharing!



### Dr. Jeff Heitner Health Sciences Scholarship

Prairie Dental Group has always placed a strong emphasis on personal growth, or as we call it -CANI. (Continuous And Never-ending Improvement). As a leader in dentistry for more than 30 years, Dr. Jeff Heitner was an exemplary model of this philosophy. His dedication to continual improvement was apparent through his long-time involvement with the West Suburban Study Club and attendance at countless continuing education meetings throughout the country and abroad.

Dr. Heitner's dedication to oral healthcare and efforts to expand his knowledge cultivated admiration and strong relationships with his colleagues within the dental community, his staff, and most of all, with his patients. Therefore, Prairie Dental Group has created the Dr. Jeff Heitner Health Science Scholarship. The 2024 scholarship winner was Jessica Decowski. She won \$500 to go towards school tuition. Congratulations Jessica, and good luck with your studies next year at St. Ben's!

If you are interested in applying for the scholarship, [CLICK HERE!](#) Applications are due by April 20th each year.



### Dr. Judd Heitner Healthcare Outreach Grant

This year's Dr. Judd Heitner Healthcare Outreach Grant was given to the Vinland National Center. This organization, located on Lake Independence, provides substance use disorder treatment to individuals with co-occurring cognitive impairments. They were the first center in the country to design a treatment program to meet the unique needs of individuals living with brain injuries.

Vinland has developed a strong national reputation for providing top-quality integrative services to individuals with traumatic brain injuries, mental health challenges, learning disabilities, and/or other, cognitive impairments. The grant money will be used to fund a scholarship for a person in need of treatment.

This \$500 annual grant is given to a dental or medical healthcare outreach program. Dr. Heitner's visits providing dental care for the children at the Esperanza Viva orphanage in Puebla, Mexico were some of the most cherished times spent in his dental career. His compassion for others made him an exceptional dentist. Dr. Judd Heitner was a valuable contributor to the success of Prairie Dental Group. He retired in 2021 and has left such a mark on his patients and team members, that we continue to be better people both personally and professionally because of our relationship with him.

If you are interested in applying for the grant, [CLICK HERE!](#)  
[Visit vinlandcenter.org](http://www.vinlandcenter.org)



### PDG Annual Fun Run

Whether we ran, walked, roller bladed, biked or strolled... our annual 5k (ish) Fun Run was a great event for the whole family! It took place in June at Rice Marsh Lake Park in Chanhassen.



### Coloring Contest 2024

Congratulations to this year's coloring contest winners! Winners received combination wristbands for 2 of the 3 experiences at the Mall of America: The Crayola Experience, Sea Life Aquarium, and Nickelodeon Universe. We always look forward to the wonderful and creative submissions! Thank you to everyone who participated!





### Voted Star Tribune MN's Best

Thank you for voting us as some of Minnesota's Best! We placed in the following categories:

SILVER -- BEST DENTIST

SILVER -- BEST COSMETIC DENTISTRY

BRONZE -- BEST PEDIATRIC DENTIST

We are proud to have served the Southwest Metro community for over 40 years!



### Socktober

We are proud to announce that Socktober was another success! During the month of October, for every pair of new socks donated by our patients, Prairie Dental Group matches the donation to those in need with The PROP Shop – Eden Prairie. This year you donated 56 pairs of socks for a total of 112 new pairs of warm (and cute) feet in our community!

Thank you to everyone who participated this year, we really appreciate your generosity!

[Visit propshopep.org](http://www.propshopep.org)



### Cash for Candy

For many years, Prairie Dental Group has bought back Halloween candy from child and adult patients, alike, in an effort to educate about the dangers of too much sugar and tooth decay, that Halloween candy contributes to! And although delicious, we believe no one needs THAT MUCH CANDY. This year, we collected about 60 pounds of Halloween candy.



Where does it go? Well, it's gotta go somewhere... right? 🤖 Although we can't promise that all 60 pounds left the office, due to some team members with real sweet tooth issues, we did donate most of it to the Minneapolis Veteran's Home for their annual Veteran's Day Program. So hopefully some smiles were in abundance during the celebration!



### **Holiday Toy Drive**

It's that time of year again! We are collecting toys for kids in need in our community. The PROP Shop – Eden Prairie uses new, unwrapped gifts for various events throughout the year, like birthday and holiday parties for kids. To participate, simply drop off your donation at our front desk!

The Holiday Toy Drive is going on now through December 31st, 2024.

[Visit propshopep.org](http://propshopep.org)



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