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Tooth Fairy Payouts Hit Hard Times

Average under-the-pillow gifts take a dip by 11 percent

ROANOKE Virginia – Looks like the Tooth Fairy tightened her money bag after an all-time high payout in 2016. According to the [Original Tooth Fairy Poll](#), sponsored by Delta Dental, the Tooth Fairy's cash gifts dropped to an average of \$4.13.

The Original Tooth Fairy Poll has typically served as a good indicator of the economy's overall direction, tracking with the movement of Standard & Poor's 500 index (S&P 500) for 12 of the past 14 years. The December 2017 poll shows the Tooth Fairy hasn't quite been able to keep up with the market's hot pace—with an 11 percent cash payout decrease from 2016, while the S&P 500 saw a total return in 2017 of almost 18 percent.

Even though the average price of a tooth dropped, the Tooth Fairy still paid out a healthy \$271 million for lost teeth across the nation. Those looking under their pillow for their first lost-tooth payout took far less of a hit, receiving an average \$5.70 per tooth, only a minor drop from 2016 which saw a \$5.72 payout.

"No matter how generous the Tooth Fairy decides to be, a visit from the Tooth Fairy is a great way to teach children good oral health habits at an early age," said Chris Pyle, vice-president of marketing and government relations for Delta Dental of Virginia. "What better time to reinforce oral health messages than during the anticipation of a visit from the Tooth Fairy?"

Other Tooth Fairy stats:

- The Tooth Fairy visits 84 percent of the nation's households with children.
- Fifty-five percent of parents confess that the Tooth Fairy may have missed a visit at some time.
- While the Tooth Fairy leaves money at 95 percent of the homes she visits, some parents say that the Tooth Fairy also leaves a small toy or game (47 percent), a letter from the Tooth Fairy (35 percent) or a tooth brush (31 percent) in addition to or instead of money.

Regional statistics:

- Tooth Fairy payouts are highest in the West with \$4.85 (\$6.76 for the first tooth).
- Followed by the Northeast at \$4.35 (\$6.45).
- The South gave \$4.12 (\$5.68).
- The Midwest at \$3.44 (\$4.37).

About the Survey: The Original Tooth Fairy Poll was conducted between December 13 and December 28, 2017 among a nationally representative sample of 1,007 parents of children ages 6-12. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percent.

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