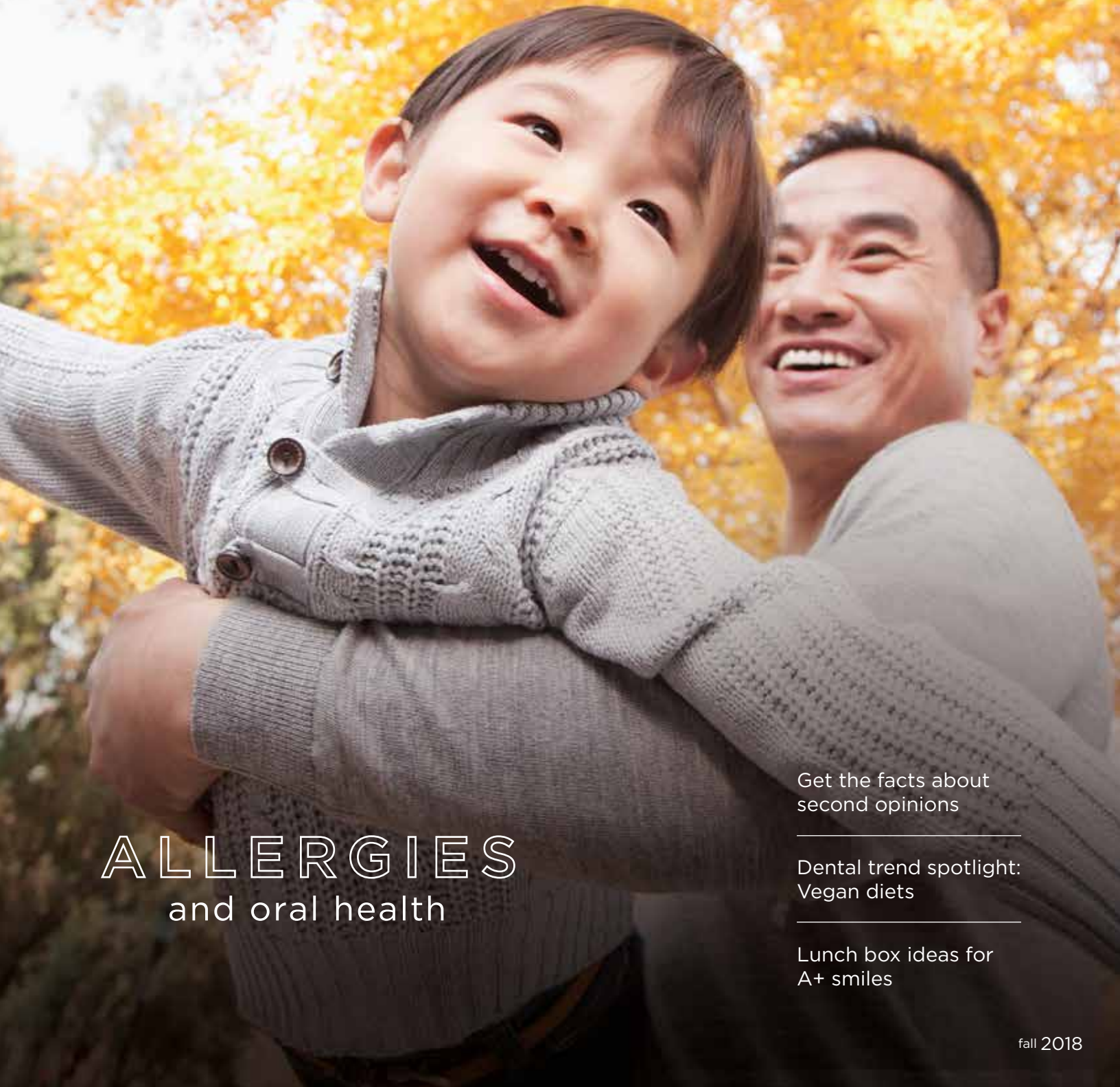


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ALLERGIES
and oral health

Get the facts about
second opinions

Dental trend spotlight:
Vegan diets

Lunch box ideas for
A+ smiles

in this issue of
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Dental trend spotlight:
Vegan diets

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Say "lights out" to kids' teeth grinding

It's not always obvious that kids grind their teeth. Learn what signs to look for and how to address the problem.

LIFESTYLE



Kick out cavities

Cavities take up residence in the mouths of most Americans at some point. Learn why they form and how to prevent them.

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On topic with Dr. Dill

Give your teeth a sporting chance

First and foremost, exercise is one of the best things you can do to keep your mouth and body healthy. But young athletes may have a higher risk of chipping teeth or experiencing other mouth injuries, depending on the sport. Obviously, football has a lot of physical contact, which is why helmets and mouth guards are specifically designed to minimize injuries. Even non-contact sports like basketball, soccer and baseball can cause inadvertent falls or elbows to the mouth. It's important for all young athletes to wear mouth guards during practices and games to minimize their risk of injury.

Hydration sources are another cause for concern. Sports drinks are frequent major sponsors of professional and college sports, so we often see our favorite stars drinking them. And it's not unusual for young athletes to mimic professionals. Unfortunately, sports drinks can be filled with sugar and unnecessary carbohydrates. Athletic activities typically don't require participants to replace minerals, electrolytes and carbohydrates. In fact, the high carbohydrate content in these sports drinks can cause obesity if consumed in large quantities. The sugars in many of them can also lead to tooth decay. Drinking plain water during and after exercise is far healthier and won't lead to obesity.

If your children participate in sports, make sure they wear mouth guards, hydrate with water and fuel up with healthy foods (see our recipe on the next page).



Meet Delta Dental's Vice President of Dental Science and Network Strategy, Joseph Dill, DDS. With over 30 years of experience in the dental field, including eight in private practice and 16 in dental insurance, Dr. Dill provides expert insights and helpful advice to keep you smiling bright.

Mouth-friendly recipe: Salmon and vegetable foil packets

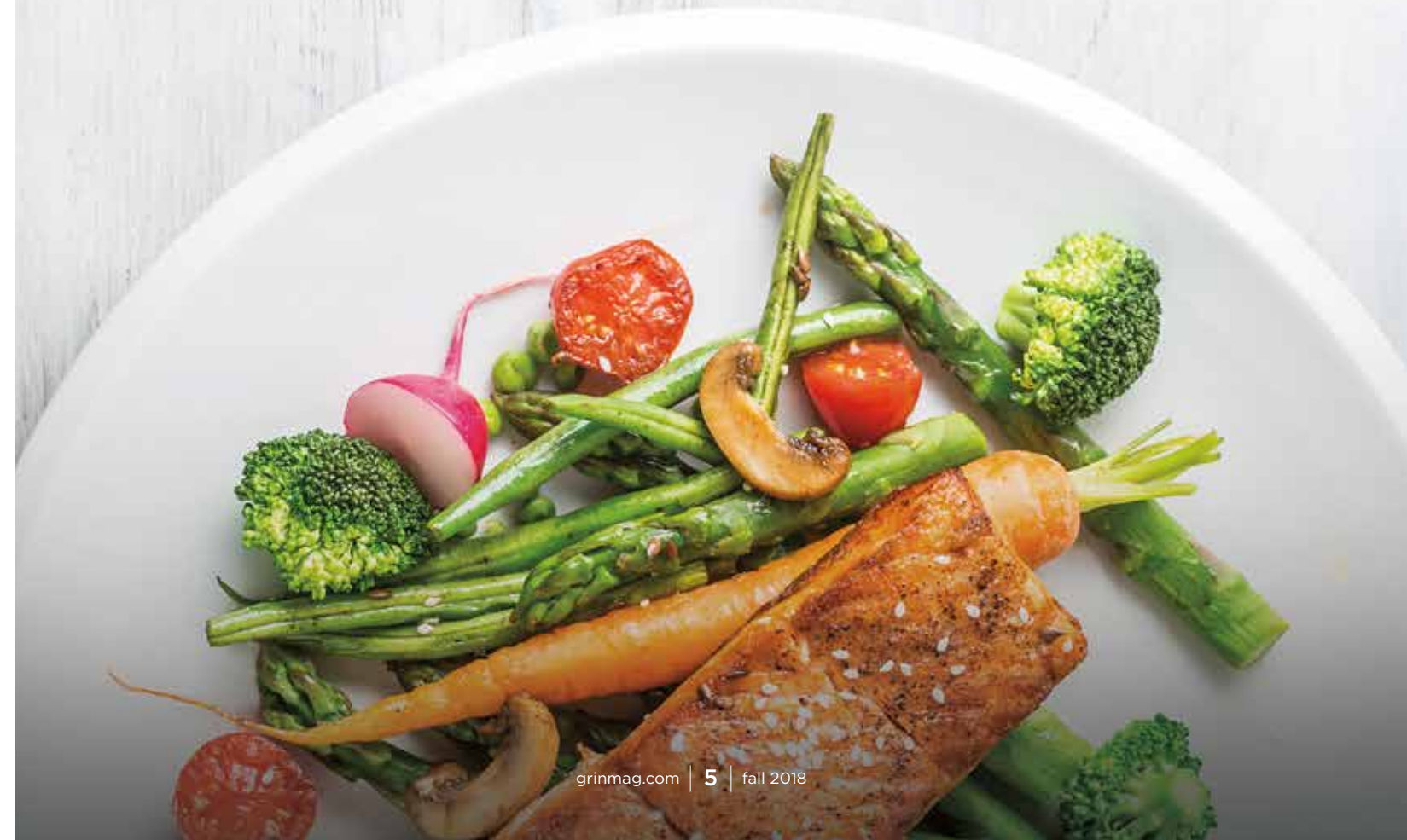
Fueling up for an athletic event – or just for the day ahead – is essential for gaining a competitive edge. The salmon in this recipe powers performance with high levels of protein and contains phosphorus for enamel health. Plus, the vitamin D found in salmon is an essential nutrient for building strong bones and teeth.

Ingredients:

1 pound assorted vegetables of your choice
2 teaspoons kosher salt
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil
4 skinless salmon fillets (6-8 ounces each)
½ teaspoon smoked paprika
⅓ teaspoon dry garlic powder or 2 cloves pressed garlic
½ teaspoon sesame seeds
4 square foil pieces (14 inches each)

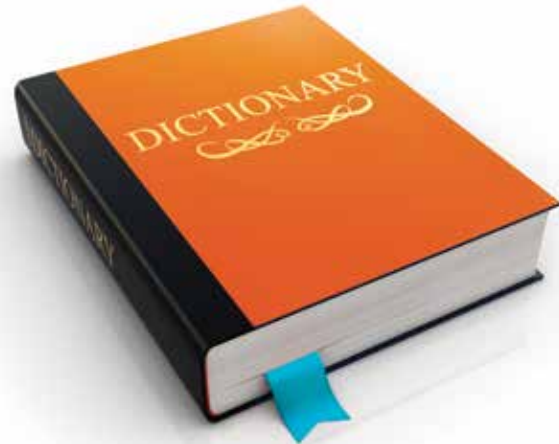
Directions:

- ① Preheat oven to 450° F.
- ② Place ¼ pound vegetables (cleaned and prepped) in the middle of each foil square.
- ③ Divide 1 teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper and 1 tablespoon olive oil between the vegetable piles.
- ④ Place salmon on top of vegetables.
- ⑤ Sprinkle with remaining salt and pepper, smoked paprika and garlic. Drizzle with remaining olive oil and sprinkle with sesame seeds.
- ⑥ Wrap foil around vegetables and salmon, sealing them inside to make individual packets.
- ⑦ Place packets on a baking sheet and bake for 15 to 20 minutes, depending on the thickness of the salmon fillets. Salmon is fully cooked when flaky and opaque.
- ⑧ Remove packets from oven and unwrap.
- ⑨ Move to serving plates and dive in!



History of oral health: Selfies

Selfies are a great way to capture memories with friends and show off your beaming smile. Take a look at our snapshot of their colorful history.



Origin of the word “selfie”

Oxford Dictionaries declared “selfie” its 2013 word of the year, but the term had already been around for at least a decade. Researchers at Oxford Dictionaries claim the earliest recorded use was in 2002 on an Australian internet forum.

The first selfie taken in space

High above the atmosphere, astronaut Buzz Aldrin snapped a selfie during his 1966 Gemini 12 mission. That’s one out-of-this-world picture!

The first American selfie

While there’s some debate, many, including the Library of Congress, agree that the first selfie was taken in 1839 by an amateur chemist and photographer, Robert Cornelius.

City with the most selfies

According to a report in a 2014 issue of *TIME* magazine, Makati City in the Philippines takes more selfies than any other city in the world. Say “cheeeese,” Philippines!



To keep your smile selfie-ready, practice good oral hygiene habits like brushing for two minutes twice a day, flossing once a day and eating a nutritious, well-balanced diet. Don't forget to schedule regular checkups and cleanings with your dentist. If you have a dental plan, preventive care is usually completely covered.

Now go show the world those pearly whites!

Readers ask, we answer

Sabrina asks:
“Is there an easy way to tell if I have a cavity?”

Hi, Sabrina! We’d love to say “yes,” but the answer is more complicated. There’s no surefire way to identify a cavity without a professional evaluation, so it’s best to see your dentist regularly.

When cavities begin, they only affect the tooth’s outer surface. This part of your tooth doesn’t contain nerve endings, meaning that you won’t have pain symptoms early on when cavities are easiest to treat. Even if you had sealants as a child, those teeth can develop cavities later in life. After five to 10 years, sealants tend to wear away.

That’s not to say that cavities can’t cause noticeable symptoms. When a cavity is large enough, you might see holes in the tooth or black, brown or white spots. Depending on its progression, a cavity might cause a consistent toothache or discomfort that comes and goes. You could also feel sensitivity when you eat sugary or acidic foods, bite down on the affected tooth, or chew on hot or cold foods. Tooth sensitivity has multiple causes, though, so it doesn’t necessarily indicate the presence of a cavity. If you have sensitive teeth, call your dentist to schedule an appointment.

Visiting the dentist regularly is key to preventing cavities or minimizing the damage if you already have one. And with dental benefits, regular visits are easy on the wallet. With most plans, there’s little to no cost to you for dental checkups and cleanings.

Have a question you’d like us to answer? Send it to grin@deltadental.com, and it could be featured in an upcoming issue.

ALLERGIES and oral health

WELLNESS

Autumn means vibrant leaves and beautiful scenes, but it also brings irritants that make allergies go haywire. All that sniffing, sneezing and mouth breathing can mean trouble for your teeth. Learn how to keep your teeth happy this season so your oral health doesn't fall behind.

Around September, allergy triggers begin to flourish. One of the most common fall allergens is ragweed pollen. The lovely fall breeze carries it for hundreds of miles, so even if it doesn't grow near you, it can still cause your allergies to flare up. Autumn also stirs up mold spores and dust mites, which are known to cause common allergic reactions like runny noses and watery eyes.

While allergies themselves don't damage teeth, they can indirectly cause mouth problems. One of the most common oral health concerns you might experience is dry mouth. It often appears as a side effect of the antihistamines used to treat allergies or as a result of more frequent mouth breathing your allergies might cause.

WELLNESS



Two-word answers

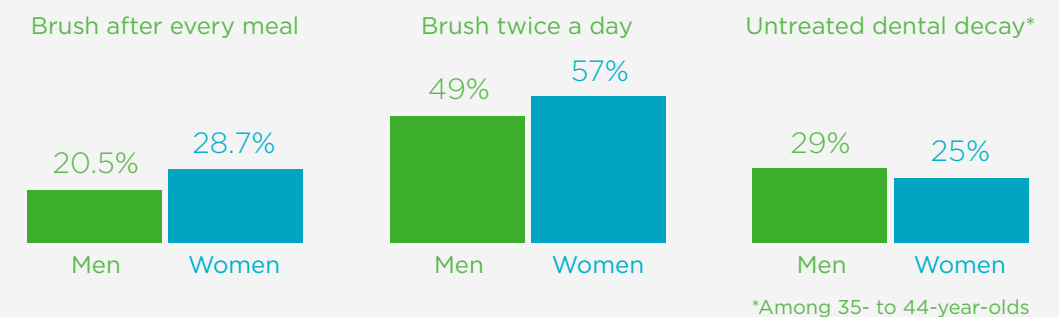


Q:
Who takes better care of their teeth – men or women?

A:
Typically, women.

Research shows differences between the sexes in terms of oral health awareness, attitude and preventive care. The American Dental Association reported men are more likely to avoid the dentist for years at a time, while women tend to keep regular checkups and cleanings. When women *do* have dental problems, they're more likely to follow their recommended treatment plans, according to a study published in 2015 by the *International Dental Journal*.

Take a look at these stats from the American Dental Association:



To keep your teeth healthy, make sure to brush, floss and visit the dentist regularly.

Because dry mouth decreases saliva, it can damage teeth and gums. Saliva helps digest food, wash food particles off your teeth, neutralize cavity-causing acids from plaque and more. When you don't have enough, your risk for tooth decay and periodontal (gum) disease increases.

The good news is that remedies are readily available. Relief can be as simple as drinking more water, chewing sugar-free gum, sucking on sugar-free hard candy and sleeping with a humidifier. If these remedies aren't working, your dentist might suggest treatments like saliva substitutes or medication.

Dry mouth isn't the only allergy-related mouth condition. The increase in bacteria associated with post-nasal drip, a common allergy symptom, often leads to bad breath. An uptick in mucous production might also cause pressure in the sinus cavity. Because this area sits above the mouth, allergy sufferers sometimes experience toothaches in their top teeth. If either of these happen to you, visit with your physician who may prescribe a decongestant or anti-inflammatory medication.

Allergies can be a pain, but preventing them from hurting your teeth doesn't have to be. By knowing what to expect and being proactive about your health, you can stay smiling all autumn long.



Lunch box ideas for A+ smiles

With fall schedules in full swing, it can be tough to maintain your family's oral health. A great way to promote oral health is to pack a lunch box with nutritious foods. Check out these insider tricks to keep your kids happy and their smiles healthy.



WELLNESS



WELLNESS

Nutritional variety

A well-balanced diet contributes to both overall and oral health. Make sure you're packing a variety of options from the five main food groups - whole grains, fruits, vegetables, protein and dairy. For an extra boost of mouth magic, try choosing fresh, crunchy foods like carrots, celery and apples. These crispy options help mouths stay clean. Their crunchy texture dislodges food from teeth, and they increase saliva production to wash away leftover food residue.

Dessert

It's no secret that kids like candy, but that doesn't mean they have to eat foods that tarnish their teeth. To prevent kids from sneaking harmful sweets at school, consider packing mouth-friendly dessert options. Try replacing milk chocolate with dark chocolate and swapping out candy with naturally sweet fruits and veggies such as berries and carrots.

Foods and drinks to avoid

Be wary of processed foods and drinks with high levels of sugar. Too many sweets like candy, cookies and juice can increase acid levels in the mouth. With repeated exposure, kids are more likely to develop cavities.

After the meal

In addition to packing crunchy fruits and vegetables, help your kids clean their teeth with sugar-free gum. If their school doesn't allow gum, encourage them to drink water to wash away any remaining food particles. When they aren't at school, make sure they brush for two full minutes in the morning and again before bed to prevent tooth decay.

Keep it fun

Lunch boxes are a great place for hiding surprises. Unexpected snacks, doodles or smiley faces can further engage kids in their lunch. Plus, it allows you to get creative. Adding stickers to their lunch box is an easy way to reward kids for eating healthy at school. You might also try leaving them a cute note with food trivia to get them excited about the snacks you've packed.

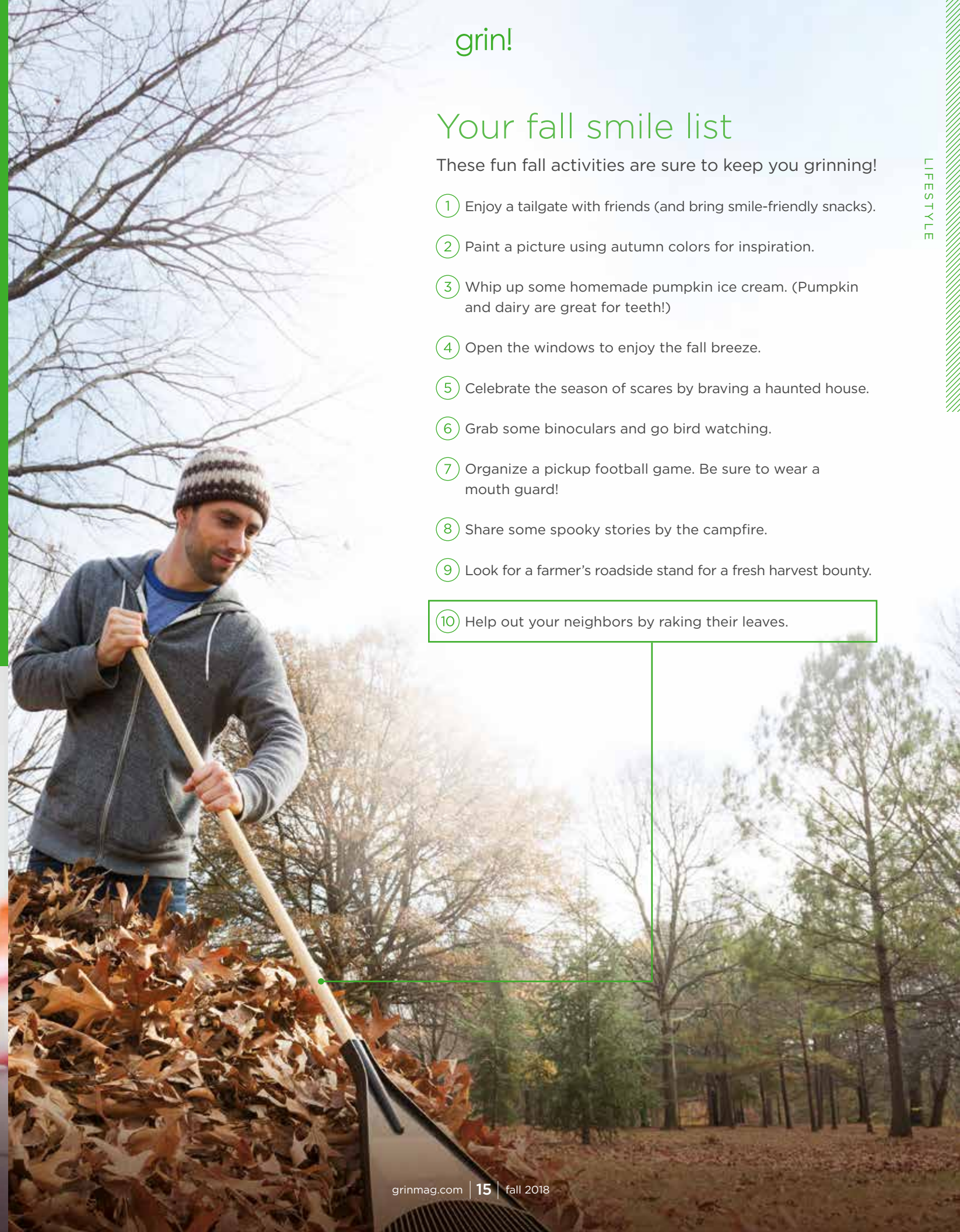
Teeth-friendly food trivia:

- **Strawberries and raspberries** are the only fruits with seeds on the outside.
- A **banana** is technically a berry.
- **Carrots** aren't just orange. They can also be red, white, purple and yellow.

Your fall smile list

These fun fall activities are sure to keep you grinning!

- 1 Enjoy a tailgate with friends (and bring smile-friendly snacks).
- 2 Paint a picture using autumn colors for inspiration.
- 3 Whip up some homemade pumpkin ice cream. (Pumpkin and dairy are great for teeth!)
- 4 Open the windows to enjoy the fall breeze.
- 5 Celebrate the season of scares by braving a haunted house.
- 6 Grab some binoculars and go bird watching.
- 7 Organize a pickup football game. Be sure to wear a mouth guard!
- 8 Share some spooky stories by the campfire.
- 9 Look for a farmer's roadside stand for a fresh harvest bounty.
- 10 Help out your neighbors by raking their leaves.



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Dental trend spotlight:

Vegan diets

You've probably heard chatter about going vegan. A 2016 Harris Poll found that an estimated 3.7 million adults in the United States adhere to a vegan diet.

While vegetarians don't eat meat, vegans go a step further by eliminating other animal products like eggs, dairy and more. People choose this modified diet for a number of reasons, including animal welfare, environmental conservation, and health benefits such as increased energy and lower cholesterol.

This shift in diet is proven to be safe, although it may have some unintended consequences for oral health. According to the American Dietetic Association, nearly anyone can live a healthy life without meat, but giving up traditional sources of nutrients can increase the risk for periodontal (gum) disease.

One of the biggest things to watch out for is maintaining adequate levels of calcium and vitamin D. Dairy is among the most popular source of calcium, which plays a pivotal role in keeping bones and teeth strong. Luckily, vegans can still get the proper amounts of calcium from broccoli, leafy greens, soybeans and calcium supplements.

In order to absorb that calcium, though, people need adequate levels of vitamin D. Fatty fish, cheese and milk are typical sources of vitamin D, but vegan sources of this nutrient can include vitamin D supplements, fortified cereals and fortified juices. (Be wary of juices with too much sugar!) And the main source of vitamin D, sunlight, is available to everyone.

Switching to veganism can take time to get used to, so it is good to seek help from reliable sources. Working with a dietitian can help accommodate veganism while still getting the nutrients a healthy mouth needs. Additionally, those considering a vegan diet should check with their physicians and dentists to ensure safe eating practices.

Our verdict: Veganism is a viable option, but it's important to maintain proper nutrition to support oral health.



Get the facts about second opinions

When it comes to your health, it's always best to trust your instincts. If you feel unsure about a dental diagnosis or treatment plan, you may consider getting a second opinion from another dentist.

What are the advantages?

Second opinions are great for verifying proposed procedures or finding new ways to tackle problems. They're best for evaluating treatments that require complicated or costly dental care like root canals, implants and more.

Will it be covered by my dental plan?

It might be, but dental plans differ when it comes to second opinions. To find out if your plan will cover the cost, contact your benefits provider before scheduling an appointment. Ask for details on what is and isn't covered so you can make the best decision for your budget.

Whom should I see?

To find a dentist for a second opinion, try asking friends and family, researching online, calling your local dental society or speaking with someone at a local dental school. Verify that each potential dentist participates in your plan's network to ensure you're getting the best value from your dental benefits.

What should I do prior to my appointment?

Ask your current dentist's office to send existing dental records including your X-rays. This will give your new dental professional the information needed to make an educated evaluation.

Get the most out of your appointment by creating a list of questions to ask. Here are some examples:

- What is your diagnosis?
- What treatments are available and how would each one improve my dental health?
- What are the risks associated with each option?
- Will I need future treatments?

When facing complex dental issues, second opinions can be helpful for managing your care and feeling confident about the decisions you make. Before scheduling an appointment, remember to select an in-network dentist and check your plan materials for details about your coverage.

5

teeth tips for school sports

School sports have begun, and players are hitting the field. Through all the ups and downs, don't let your kid's oral health get put on the bench. Follow these five tips to maintain terrific teeth from the first practice to the final buzzer.



1

**Always wear a mouth guard**

Mouth guards significantly reduce teeth and mouth injuries, including chipped teeth, lip cuts and jaw damage. There are three kinds of mouth guards – ready-made, boil-and-bite and custom. You can purchase the first two at sports or retail stores, but the boil-and-bite type is a bit more form fitting. Custom mouth guards are pricier, but they offer the best fit.

2

**Choose water to hydrate**

Water is the best way to hydrate during practices and games, but some athletes consume sports drinks that are harmful to teeth. Sports drinks aren't actually necessary for proper hydration, and they often contain high levels of sugar and acid. Plus, water helps wash away food and cavity-causing bacteria from teeth.

3

**Fuel up like an oral health all-star**

Nutrition is a huge part of athletic performance. Before your kids enjoy a pre-game meal, take a few moments to think about their oral health. Reach for nutritious sources of carbohydrates such as whole-grain breads, vegetables, fruits, beans and legumes. And don't forget high-protein foods like chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, dairy and nuts.

4

**Keep teeth and mouth guards clean**

With continued use, mouth guards can harbor some pretty foul bacteria. Make sure your kids brush their teeth before popping in their mouth guards and after taking them out. It's important to wash mouth guards after each use according to your dentist's instructions or as noted on the packaging.

5

**Be prepared for a mouth injury**

With a high-contact sport, athletes are at a higher risk for dental injuries. According to a study published in the *Journal of the American Dental Association*, between 13 and 39 percent of all dental injuries are caused by athletic activities. Be prepared by knowing where to go, whom to see and how your coverage applies in cases of mouth emergencies.



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Smiles are such simple gestures, yet they're so powerful. That's why Delta Dental protects more smiles than anyone. As the nation's leading dental insurance provider, we make it easy to keep your smile healthy with specialized expertise and the largest network of dentists. **Start protecting your smile today by choosing your plan at [DeltaDental.com](https://www.DeltaDental.com).**