

# grin!®

ORAL HEALTH DEEP DIVE:

## OCEANS & POOLS

Oral health care at  
the state fair

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Mouth emergency  
preparedness

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5 BBQ tips for  
healthy smiles

in this issue of  
**grin!**

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Oral health deep dive:  
Oceans & pools

Have fun by splashing in the sun, but check to make sure it's safe for your smile. We take a look at the effects ocean and pool water can have on teeth.

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Oral health care at the state fair

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Mouth emergency preparedness

It can be tough to manage a mouth emergency, but with a little prep beforehand, you can handle anything that comes your way like a pro.

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LIFESTYLE



Are you picky about your gums?

When it comes to using toothpicks, this video gets right to the point. Take a peek to find out why it's best to trade toothpicks for floss.

WELLNESS



Walk your way to better oral health

A summer stroll isn't just great for your soul – it's great for your smile, too! Every time you go for a walk, you're taking steps toward a healthier body, mind *and* mouth.

Access the digital version anytime, anywhere at [grinmag.com](http://grinmag.com).



## On topic with Dr. Dill

### Oral health during summer break

Crazy schedules and disrupted daily routines can be fun for kids, but they can cause oral health to fall by the wayside. That's why it's a good time for some simple ground rules that help keep summer fun *and* healthy.

Kids stay up late, go to sleepovers, leave for camps and visit relatives. These can all become excuses to forget about good oral hygiene. Remind your kids to pack a toothbrush, fluoride toothpaste, floss and a retainer (if they wear one). Insist that they make taking care of their teeth a priority – in the morning and in the evening.

Sugary drinks, ice cream, candy, fast food and more snacking than usual can easily become part of your summer rhythm. Keep an eye on your child's diet and stock up on healthy snacks like fresh fruits and vegetables. Have water on hand instead of high-sugar, decay-causing sodas, juices and sports drinks.

Summer is also the time for swimming, biking, running and general horsing around. Mouth injuries can occur during these activities. Take precautions by wearing a mouth guard during sports and being prepared for accidents. See page 17 for ways to plan for an emergency and items to include in an emergency dental kit.



Finally, schedule a dental checkup before school begins. If you're rushing to finish your to-do list as summer comes to an end, the Delta Dental mobile app can help you schedule appointments quickly and easily. Sign in to view available times in your dentist's schedule\*, then book and manage your appointments on your device. Plus, the app lets you access claims information, view coverage details, estimate procedure costs and more.

Starting off the school year with good oral health will help ensure fewer lost school days for your child and fewer lost work days for you.



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: Watermelon, feta and mint salad

Watermelon is a summertime staple, but did you know it's good for your teeth, too? The high water content found in watermelon encourages saliva production that helps wash away food stuck on teeth, and its rich amounts of vitamin C can help strengthen gum tissues and prevent certain infections. Mix up this refreshing watermelon recipe for your sunny-day picnics.

#### Ingredients:

6 cups cubed watermelon  
 ¾ cup crumbled feta cheese  
 ¼ cup thinly sliced red onion  
 ¼ cup chopped fresh mint  
 ½ tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
 Salt and pepper to taste

#### Directions:

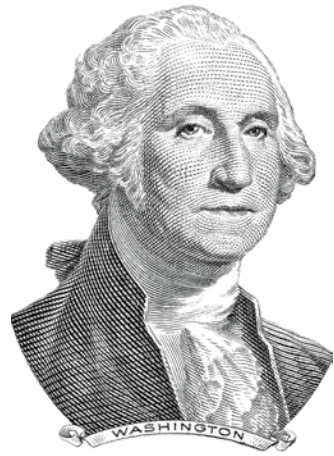
Carefully toss all the ingredients together in a large bowl. Enjoy!



\*Appointment scheduling is powered by our partners at Brighter™. Availability may vary by geographic area and individual dentist participation in Brighter Schedule™.

## History of oral health: Founding Fathers and early patriots

Celebrate the Fourth of July by remembering the men who made history in America's earliest days of independence.



**George Washington** reportedly smiled very rarely, and his dentures could have been the cause. The combination of horse, cow and human teeth that made up his dentures forced his lips to protrude awkwardly. Washington also felt that dentures were a sign of weakness.

**Thomas Jefferson** kept his teeth in remarkably good condition for the era. When he was 81 years old, he claimed that he'd only lost one adult tooth in his lifetime.

**John Adams** had a sweet tooth and tried to cure diseases by throwing up, which caused him to lose a number of teeth. Because he refused to wear dentures, it was difficult to understand him when he spoke.

**Paul Revere** practiced dentistry by cleaning teeth and selling dentures. Plus, historians believe he was the first person to identify a body by its teeth.



Our Founding Fathers and early patriots didn't always have great luck with their teeth, but with proper care, you can. Regular checkups and cleanings with your dentist are a key part of lifelong oral health.

With Delta Dental, preventive care is usually covered at 100 percent!



## Readers ask, we answer

*Janice asks:*  
"Is it OK to drink out of a garden hose?"

Hi, Janice. It may be tempting to turn the spigot and take a sip, but drinking this water isn't a good idea. Garden hoses have been shown to contain a host of chemicals that can be harmful to children and adults alike.

As a garden hose sits between uses, the water inside collects bacteria and chemicals from the hose's plastic tubing. In addition, the brass ring at the opening can contain even more contaminants. This contamination is worsened if the hose has been sitting in the sun for extended periods of time.

Among other chemicals, lead is a big concern with regard to drinking from a hose. While research in this area is lacking, a study conducted by the Ann Arbor Ecology Center in 2016 found evidence that certain hoses leach unsafe levels of lead into water. When it comes to oral health, lead exposure has been shown to increase the risk of cavities for people of all ages. From an overall health standpoint, it can have dramatic consequences, especially on children younger than 6 years old. Lead has been linked to severe mental and physical developmental issues. In some cases, lead poisoning can even be fatal.

Your plants may love the water from the garden hose, but it's best for children and adults to steer clear. Try bringing a bottle of water with you to do yardwork or taking a trip inside to pour yourself a glass from the tap.

Have a question you'd like us to answer? Send it to [grin@deltadental.com](mailto:grin@deltadental.com), and it could be featured in an upcoming issue.

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LIFESTYLE



ORAL HEALTH DEEP DIVE:

# OCEANS & POOLS



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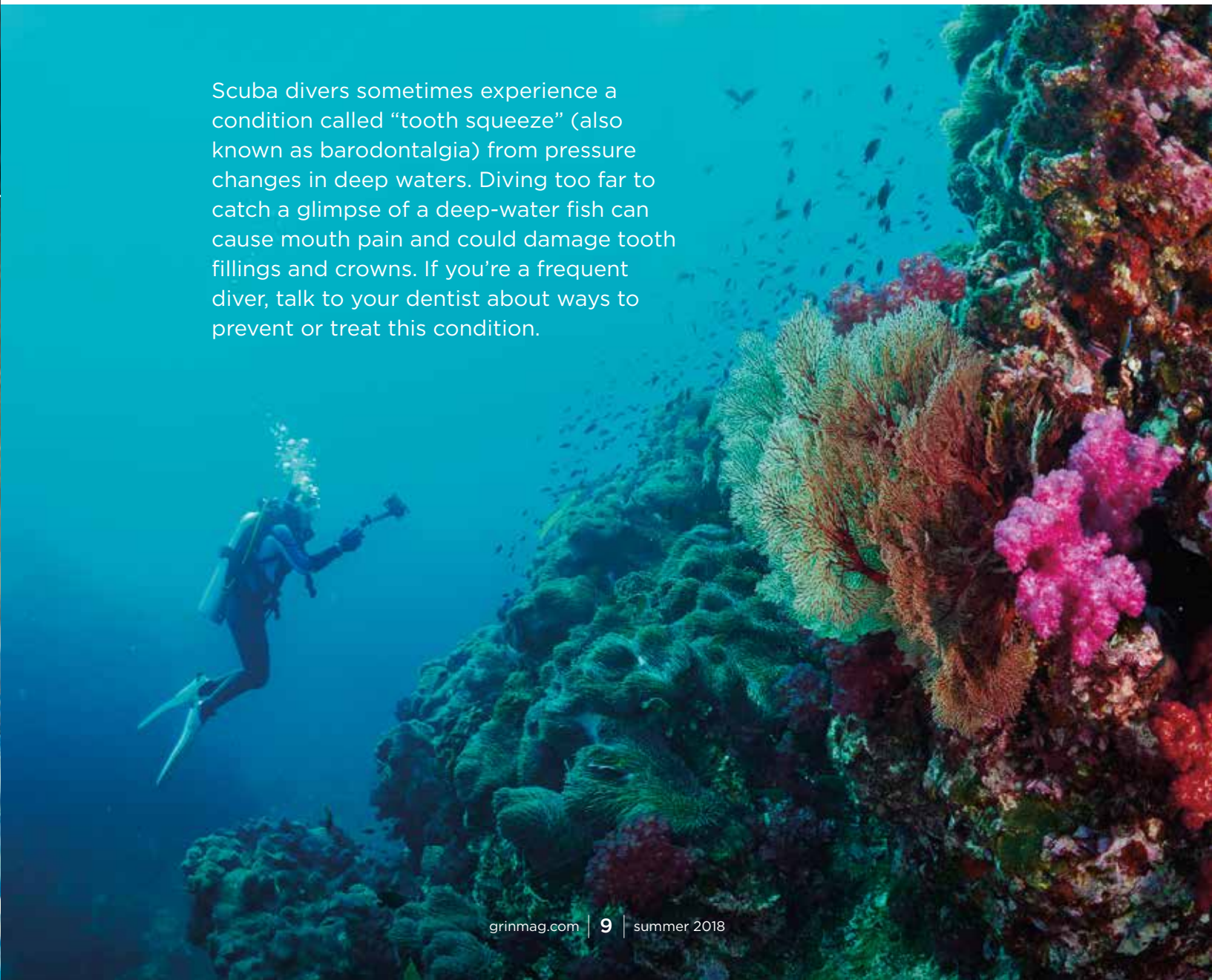
LIFESTYLE



Swimming is a great way to enjoy the summer sun, but how do your teeth feel about it? Learn about the effects that ocean and pool water can have on your smile.

## OCEAN WATER

While we certainly don't suggest drinking it, going for a swim won't hurt. The salt in ocean water is surprisingly good for your teeth. In fact, salt has healing properties for sore throats and mouth sores. Swishing with a mixture of salt and drinking water after oral surgery can even prevent infections.



Scuba divers sometimes experience a condition called "tooth squeeze" (also known as barodontalgia) from pressure changes in deep waters. Diving too far to catch a glimpse of a deep-water fish can cause mouth pain and could damage tooth fillings and crowns. If you're a frequent diver, talk to your dentist about ways to prevent or treat this condition.

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LIFESTYLE



Swimmers should always remove dental appliances, like retainers, before swimming to keep them from getting lost.

### POOL WATER

Ocean water isn't a threat to your smile, but chlorinated pool water is a different story. Exposing teeth to improperly chlorinated pools (those with a pH level below seven) can erode enamel and cause tooth sensitivity. It can also lead to staining and a condition called swimmer's calculus. When exposed to chlorine for more than six hours a week, teeth can turn yellow or brown and develop hard deposits as the plaque on your teeth reacts with chlorine. If you swim in chlorinated pools often, talk to your dentist about preventing staining, swimmer's calculus and enamel erosion. Your dentist will be able to provide treatment if you've already begun experiencing symptoms.

Wherever you choose to swim, these simple precautions can ensure your summer fun doesn't take a dive. When you're enjoying the ocean, remember to stay in designated areas, and jump in the pool only when a lifeguard is on duty. Because the pool can be slippery, it's also easy to fall and chip a tooth. Avoid running no matter how tempting it may be.

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LIFESTYLE

## Two-word answers



**Q:**  
Do the British really have worse teeth than Americans?

**A:**  
Not really.

From casual jokes to media portrayals, the myth that the British have worse teeth than Americans has played out over and over. But findings detailed by the British Dental Association suggest that this myth doesn't hold up against reality. In fact, the results showed people in Britain may actually have better oral health.

Teeth differences might exist between the two countries, but they probably have more to do with cosmetic preferences than oral health. Corrective measures like orthodontics and teeth whitening have long been popular in the U.S. but may not be as widespread in the U.K. These differences have been dramatized in the media. British characters are sometimes depicted with faded smiles and chipped teeth, while American actors typically maintain straight, sparkling teeth on screen.

No matter where you live, it's important to practice good oral health habits like brushing twice a day for two minutes, flossing once a day and visiting your dentist regularly.

### Americans<sup>1</sup>

40% avoid sugar	51% brush for two minutes twice a day	7.31 missing teeth
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### British<sup>1</sup>

53% avoid sugar	64% brush for two minutes twice a day	6.97 missing teeth
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<sup>1</sup>British Dental Association, British Teeth vs. the Hollywood Smile, 2017, <https://bda.org/news-centre/blog/Pages/British-Teeth-vs-the-Hollywood-Smile.aspx>

## ORAL HEALTH CARE AT THE STATE FAIR

Looking forward to your state fair? Along with exciting attractions, the state fair can introduce foods that aren't great for your teeth. Before buying your ticket, check out our tips to keep the fair from harming your oral health.

WELLNESS



### SWEET TREATS

Moderation is key at the fair. While it's fine to indulge in something sweet here and there, avoid foods with especially high volumes of sugar like funnel cakes and fried candy bars. All that sugar fosters an environment in your mouth that feeds bacteria. The bacteria then create acids that harm your tooth enamel. Over time, it can even lead to tooth decay and cavities.

### TEETH CARE

When that deep-fried cookie dough is calling your name and you simply can't resist, follow it up with the oral health basics. If you can, pack a travel-size toothbrush, fluoride toothpaste and floss. Sneak into the bathroom after meals to clean your teeth. Chewing sugar-free gum is a good short-term solution to reduce leftover food particles until the next time you can brush.

WELLNESS

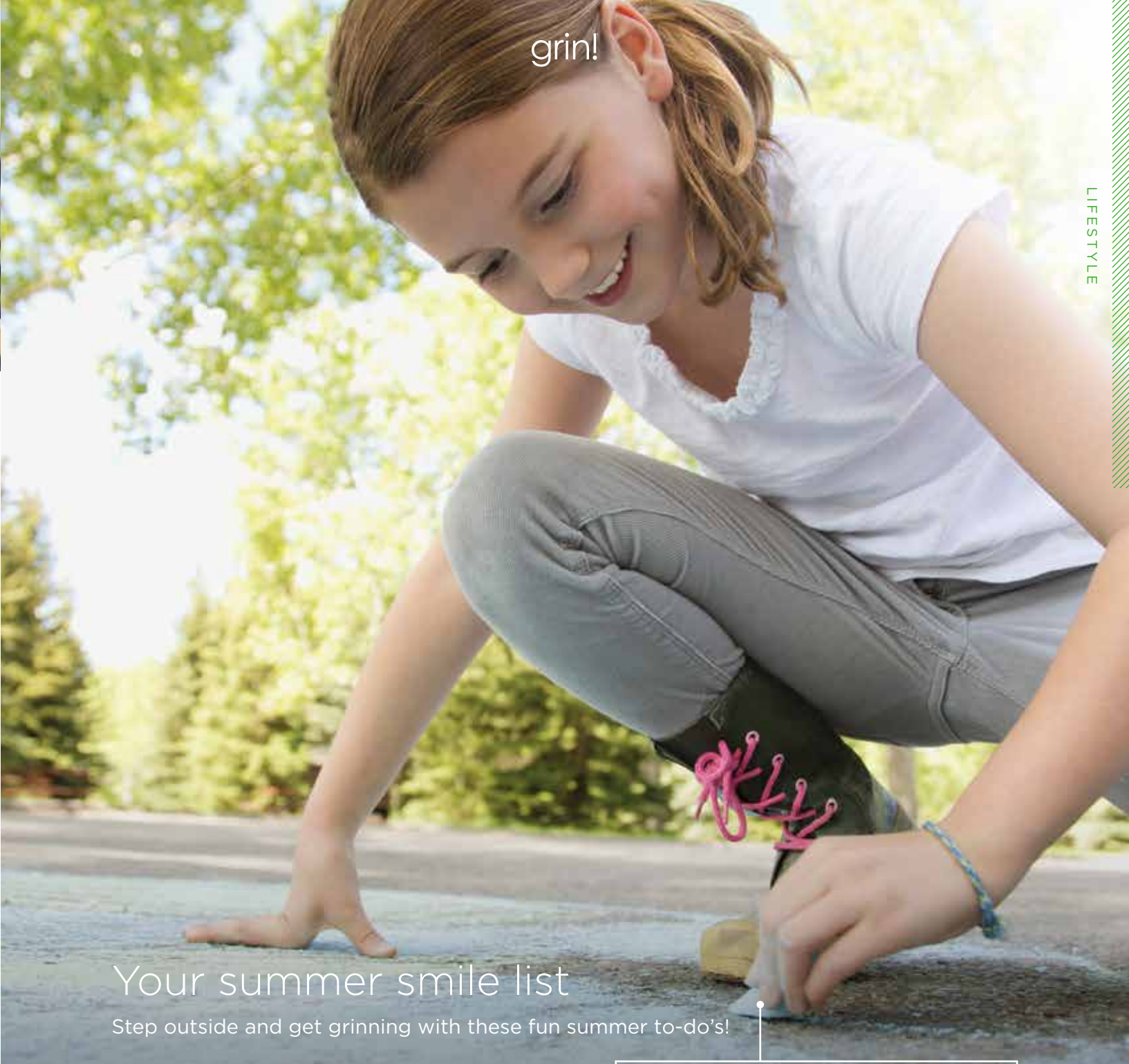




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LIFESTYLE

WELLNESS

- The largest state fair in the U.S. takes place in one of the largest states – Texas!
- Cotton candy was invented by a dentist from Nashville but made its public debut at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904.
- The Georgia State Fair has a one-of-a-kind derby where dogs wear saddles so monkeys can ride on their backs and race for the top prize.

### HEALTHIER OPTIONS

Amid the bounty of sweet concoctions, you can still find healthy options. Try choosing fair foods that are friendlier to your mouth like fresh fruit smoothies, meat and veggie kabobs, roasted nuts and salads. Or, to ensure that your teeth and tummy get the nutrients they need, pack healthy foods to snack on. Chomping on carrots or apples (sometimes called nature's dental detergent) after a sugary snack can help remove harmful mouth debris.

Water is another great way to help maintain your oral health at the fair. Drink water throughout the day to wash away acids that erode tooth enamel. If you're choosing between soda and water, remember that your teeth will always be happier with water.

### STAYING PREPARED

Between the bumper cars and the candied apples, fairgoers face multiple opportunities for mouth injuries. Keep your dentist's phone number and a map to the exit on hand. See page 17 for more information on mouth emergency prep.

Check out your state's fair and all the unique activities it has to offer. Just be sure to keep your oral health in mind so you can leave with great memories *and* a healthy smile.

## Your summer smile list

Step outside and get grinning with these fun summer to-do's!

- 1 Go canoeing in a nearby river or bay.
- 2 Host a neighborhood BBQ. Find five tips for mouth-friendly BBQs on pages 18-19.
- 3 Organize a kickball game with friends. And always wear a mouth guard!
- 4 Explore a new park. Don't forget sunscreen and lip balm with an SPF 30+ rating.
- 5 Play Marco Polo at the pool.
- 6 Show off your artsy side with sidewalk chalk.
- 7 Camp out in the backyard. Run inside to brush your teeth before lights out.
- 8 Set up a hummingbird feeder to attract nature's fastest feathered friend.
- 9 Load the car with blankets and healthy snacks to see a drive-in movie.
- 10 Pack a basket and enjoy a picnic.







## Dental trend spotlight: DIY toothpaste

Some DIY fans are ditching store-bought toothpaste for homemade substitutes. Before you whip up your own, consider the oral health implications and what you might be giving up.

DIY toothpaste recipes vary widely, but typical ingredients include coconut oil, baking soda, sea salt, cacao nibs and essential oils. Proponents of homemade toothpastes claim they provide greater ingredient transparency. Because users make these recipes from scratch, they can see exactly what they'll be brushing with. However, you can rest assured that almost all the toothpastes you see in stores have been reviewed and approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The big question is, "Does DIY toothpaste clean teeth as well as store-bought?" Research may be limited, but one study<sup>1</sup> showed that it can when it comes to plaque removal. The problem is, when you brush with DIY toothpaste, you miss out on the benefits of fluoride. Fluoride exposure from toothpaste, drinking water and other sources is largely responsible for the huge decline in tooth decay over the past several decades.

Store-bought toothpastes contain the proper amounts of fluoride to fight tooth decay, so replacing them with DIY toothpastes can cause a significant deficiency in fluoride exposure. In addition to fluoride, toothpastes may contain active ingredients that help in other ways, such as reducing tooth sensitivity, whitening teeth, fighting gingivitis and tartar buildup, and preventing enamel erosion and bad breath.

Our verdict: Stick with store-bought toothpaste to maintain adequate levels of fluoride exposure.

<sup>1</sup>IOSR Journal of Dental and Medical Science, Comparison Between Homemade Toothpaste and Commercial Toothpaste in Plaque Removal of Children in Udaipur City Rajasthan, 2017, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/fbb4/a9fe8bd96dfb7f01642df9810af7ced208ad.pdf>



## Mouth emergency preparedness

With all the summer activities you may be enjoying, make sure you know what to do in case of a common dental emergency.

**Speak to your dentist during your next appointment to make a preemptive plan about where to go.** Many dentists provide room in their schedules during the day to accommodate emergency patients. If yours is not available to address an issue when you call, your dental office may be able to refer you to another dentist.

**If something happens at night or on the weekend, you have a couple of options.** Your dentist should have an after-hours line to call. Ask for the number during your next appointment and write it down in a convenient location. Depending on your emergency, urgent care or the emergency room may be the best option. Doctors at these facilities can't provide permanent dental repair, but they can help manage the pain. Your dental benefits won't apply, so check your medical plan for emergency coverage.

### Create a dental emergency kit to keep with you in the car or while on vacation.

- A small container with a sealable lid
- Your dentist's contact information
- Gauze and bandages
- A cloth
- Dental wax for kids with braces
- Temporary filling material
- Pain reliever

### Check out some of the most common mouth emergencies and tips for handling them:

- **Toothaches** can usually be addressed at home with a pain reliever and a cold compress followed by a visit to your dentist.
- Treat **bitten tongues and lips** by washing the area gently and applying a cold compress. If the wound doesn't stop bleeding, go to the nearest urgent care or emergency room.
- If a **permanent tooth is knocked out**, visit your dentist as soon as possible. In the meantime, take immediate steps to preserve the tooth. Avoid touching the tooth's root. Gently rinse it with milk or water without scrubbing off any remaining tissue. Try to place it back in the socket and hold it in place. If you can't, put the tooth in milk or water. By visiting the dentist right away, you may be able to save the tooth.
- If a child's **baby tooth is knocked out**, apply pressure to the area to stop the bleeding. It will not need to be preserved like a permanent tooth, so don't try to put it back in the socket. You may harm the permanent tooth growing beneath it and your child could swallow it.

**By planning now, you can feel confident in your ability to handle any mouth emergency that comes your way.**

# 5

## BBQ tips for healthy smiles

Backyard BBQs are a chance to unwind and enjoy the warm weather with family and friends. While you're indulging in summer fun, don't let the season do a number on your teeth. Try these five tips to keep your smile shining.



1

### BBQ sauce

BBQ sauce usually contains high fructose corn syrup and sticky sugars that can cling to teeth and possibly contribute to tooth decay. Consider other main dishes or recipes with less sugar like a dry rub.



2

### Side dishes

Salad dressings, cold pastas and desserts may contain high levels of sugar. Swish with water after a meal to remove food particles, eat salad with crunchy lettuce to keep unwanted remnants from sticking to teeth or try a new recipe like the one featured on page 5.



3

### Toothpicks

A nice juicy steak from the grill can make your mouth water, but when the meal's done, chances are you'll have remnants stuck in your teeth. Instead of reaching for a toothpick, choose floss, which is softer and more effective. Not only can toothpicks damage your gums, but you can also experience serious injuries from swallowing them.



4

### Ice cubes

Chewing on ice cubes can cause cracked teeth and damaged enamel. To get the same refreshing effect without a possible tooth emergency, let the ice melt in your mouth or chill your drinks in the fridge before serving them.



5

### Alcoholic beverages

The clink of beer bottles is a cheery sound at backyard get-togethers, but too many alcoholic drinks can hurt your teeth. With large amounts of sugar, some alcohols can lead to tooth decay. Alcohol also causes dehydration, which decreases saliva and prevents bacteria from being washed away. Alternate adult beverages with water to help prevent tooth decay (and possibly a headache the next morning).





*/ A smile can say*

**I CAN'T REPEAT IT  
BUT IT'S GOOD**

Every smile tells a story. And each one can say something powerful. As the nation's leading dental benefits provider, Delta Dental makes it easy to protect your smile and keep it healthy with the largest network of dentists nationwide, quick answers and personalized service. **Learn more at [DeltaDental.com](https://www.DeltaDental.com).**

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