

grin!

news, notes &
entertainment to
keep your smile
healthy & happy

april
2012
volume 1, issue 1

hit the road with
**tooth-friendly
munchies**

dental disasters don't take vacations

what to do in an
emergency

**summer
staples**
that are damaging
your teeth



FEATURE ARTICLE

dental disasters don't take vacations

page 8

what to do when you have an emergency



table of contents

- 4 readers ask, we answer
- the history of oral health: toothbrushes
- 5 mouth-friendly recipe: spinach & mandarin orange salad
- 6 when the joke is on your teeth: foolish oral health behaviors
- 10 hit the road with tooth-friendly munchies
- 11 summer staples that are damaging your teeth
- 12 brushing up: an interview with dr. suzy press
- keeping you covered

cavity-free calendar



april

Celebrate Oral Health Month.



may

World No Tobacco Day is May 31. If you needed an excuse to quit, here you go.



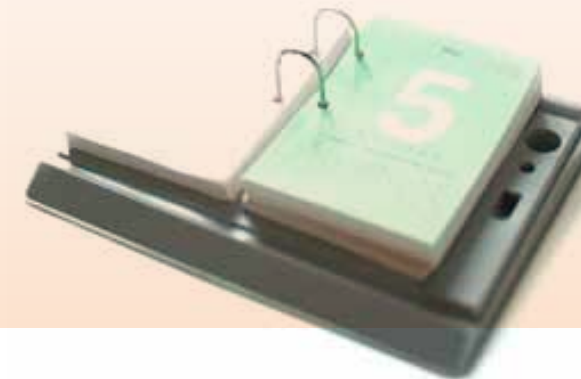
june

Men's Health Week. Men are less likely than women to seek preventive dental care. Hey, guys! Buck the trend by scheduling a cleaning today.



july

Women's Health Week. Women have different health issues than men, making them more susceptible to dry mouth and jaw joint pain, as well as gum disease, particularly relating to pregnancy. Schedule regular checkups with your dentist to make sure you're not at risk.



mouthings off

We want to hear from you! Send your response to this issue's question to grin@deltadental.com and put "Mouthing Off" in the subject line. Giving us your two cents could win you a Sonicare™ toothbrush! Here's this issue's question:

"Are you as diligent about flossing and brushing on vacation as you are when you're at home? Why or why not?"

For this inaugural issue of *Grin!*, we polled Delta Dental employees: **What puts a grin on your face?**

"Two kids at home in bed sleeping peacefully."

– Greg B.

"Watching my dog, Cooper, play in the park."

– Julia G.

"Watching loved ones meet and embrace each other at the airport."

– Kathy J.

"Cheesy valentine cards. (Puns are the best.)"

– Kim V.

"Knowing that I made someone's day. Also, getting A's in my first Master's Program class!"

– Stefany C.

"When I hear an old favorite song on the radio and it takes me back to a fabulous moment in time."

– Amy H.

"Dry humor."

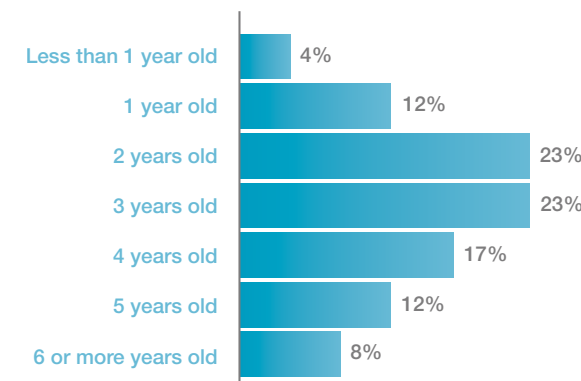
– Marie M.

"Irony."

– Lynn J.

by the numbers

Age of Child at First Dentist Visit
(among those who have been to the dentist)



MEAN = 3.1 Years

Source: Delta Dental Children's Oral Health Survey, 2011



readers ask, we answer

Kylie from East Providence, Rhode Island, writes:

“Should I upgrade from my traditional toothbrush to an electric toothbrush, or are they equally effective?”

Hi, Kylie. Studies have shown that most power toothbrushes aren't any better at getting the plaque off your teeth than old, tried-and-true manual brushes. That being said, people who have problems reaching certain parts of their mouths — little kids, for example, or people with arthritis — often find that electric toothbrushes can get into corners better. Electric toothbrushes typically have thicker handles as well, another plus for people who have difficulty grasping the thinner manual models. To answer your question, electric versus manual really boils down to personal preference and comfort.



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



mouth-friendly recipe

Spinach & Mandarin Orange Salad

- 1 bag baby spinach, rinsed
- 1 can mandarin oranges in water (not syrup) or 1 fresh Clementine, peeled and broken into pieces

- ½ cup sliced carrots
- ⅓ cup slivered almonds
- ½ cup sugar-free raspberry vinaigrette
- ¼ cup crumbled goat or feta cheese

Combine spinach, fruit, carrots and almonds in a bowl. Pour dressing over salad and toss. Top with cheese and serve!

Spinach is a great way to get added calcium and iron in your diet — your teeth will thank you for a little extra of both. Oranges are also a great source of calcium, plus potassium and fiber.

the history of oral health: toothbrushes

3000 B.C.

People have been brushing their teeth for ages — literally. Archaeologists have discovered primitive toothbrushes made of twigs that date back to 3000 B.C. or so.



1000

Toothbrush models with bristles made of horsehair started showing up sometime around the year 1,000 A.D. in China.

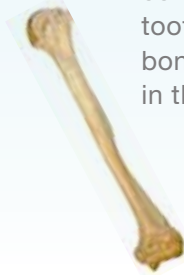


1690s

The earliest identified use of the word *toothbrush* appears in the autobiography of an antiquarian named Anthony Wood.

1700s

English businessman William Addis crafted the first commercially sold toothbrushes out of bone and horsehair in the late 1700s.



1938

The first *modern* toothbrush appeared in 1938, when Dupont de Nemours introduced a nylon bristle brush called Doctor West's Miracle Toothbrush.

1960

Broxodent, one of the first electric toothbrushes, hit the American market this year.



2003

A poll conducted by MIT showed that the toothbrush is the top invention people could not live without, followed by the automobile, the PC and the cell phone.



when the joke is on your teeth

foolish oral health behaviors

Although April Fools' Day is behind us for another year, some people treat their teeth foolishly regardless of the month. If you're guilty of diving into hot pizza too fast or ripping packages open with your teeth, don't worry — we've got some fixes for you.

THE HABIT: CHOMPING ON HARD OBJECTS SUCH AS ICE, POPCORN KERNELS OR HARD CANDY

Why It's Foolish: It can chip or even crack your teeth.

The Fix: If you just need to chew or chomp, try sugar-free chewing gum or chomp on crunchy-but-healthy snacks such as celery and carrots. Xylitol-based gum is the best of the sugar-free gums and can actually reduce your risk for tooth decay.



“Keep a small pair of scissors in your car or purse for package-opening emergencies.”

THE HABIT: OPENING PACKAGES WITH YOUR TEETH

Why It's Foolish: Tough plastic or other resilient materials can crack or chip your teeth as surely as if you chomp on jawbreaker candies. Even thin packaging or tape can get stuck between your teeth, irritating and even cutting your gums.

The Fix: Keep a small pair of scissors in your car or purse for package-opening emergencies. Even the smallest Swiss Army knife usually has a tiny (but handy) pair of scissors.

THE HABIT: CHOWING DOWN ON YOUR PIZZA BEFORE IT COOLS



Why It's Foolish: The good news is that most food burns are minor and won't cause lasting damage. The bad news? Mouth burns are just plain painful and can persist for many days.

The Fix: Luckily, preventing this one is pretty easy: Just wait a few more minutes for your meal to cool! Drink a glass of water while you're biding your time. Already too late? Sucking on an ice cube should temporarily numb the pain. Minor burns can then be treated with an over-the-counter ointment or topical mouth analgesic containing benzocaine. Depending on the severity of the burn, your mouth could take a few days to heal. While you're waiting, that mouth burn is the perfect excuse to treat yourself to a milkshake and enjoy plenty of other cool foods and drinks such as iced tea and cold milk. Avoid spicy foods and hot beverages like coffee and cocoa.



THE HABIT: CHEWING ON YOUR LIP OR CHEEK

Why It's Foolish: Chewing too hard can open a painful cut in your mouth — never a good thing.

The Fix: For many people cheek or lip biting is a nervous habit similar to nail biting — which, by the way, is also bad for your teeth and gums. To keep your jaws occupied, try chewing sugar-free gum or keeping baby carrots on hand to munch.

Accidental but repeated cheek-chomping could be a sign that your bite is misaligned or you may have chipped a tooth. Your dentist should be able to give you guidance on what might be causing this issue.

THE HABIT: SMOKING OR CHEWING TOBACCO

Why It's Foolish: By now everyone knows that smoking causes lung cancer. To eliminate that risk some tobacco users switch from smoking cigarettes to chewing tobacco. The truth is that although smokeless tobacco doesn't cause lung cancer, it still may lead to deadly and painful cancers of the lips, tongue and cheek. Aside from cancer, chewing tobacco can also cause stained teeth and tooth loss.

The Fix: Unfortunately we're not here to tell you that there's one easy way to give up tobacco products. Some people find that going cold turkey is the only thing that works for them. Others have success with nicotine patches or gum. Whichever route you end up taking, be sure to consult with your physician and dentist, and enlist the help of your friends and family for support.

dental disasters don't take vacations



Vacations are supposed to be about relaxing, not panicking, but dental emergencies can crop up anywhere. These setbacks don't discriminate between office cubicles or sandy beaches. Here are a few of the most common emergencies and what to do until you can get to a dentist.

Toothache. First, brush and floss gently, then rinse with warm water. It's possible that a food particle has gotten wedged somewhere and is causing discomfort. Still sore? Take an over-the-counter pain reliever. **Do not use heat or place the pain reliever directly on your gums or tooth.** Try to stick to fairly soft foods and get to a dentist to have the tooth examined as soon as you can.



Broken Tooth. If there's any bleeding, gauze and a bit of light pressure should stop it within about 10 minutes. If not, try a moist tea bag. If the injury is painful, over-the-counter pain relievers may help make you more comfortable, as will avoiding hard foods. **If jagged edges of your tooth are poking into your cheeks or gums, put dental wax over the sharp parts.** The same advice applies for a broken filling or crown. If possible save the crown or filling to bring to the dentist. If you have denture adhesive on hand, you can use that to temporarily reattach the crown until you make it to your appointment.



Knocked-Out Tooth.

First, find the missing tooth. Pick it up by the crown (the part that shows in the mouth) and avoid touching the root. Rinse the tooth gently in cool water; don't scrub or use soap. If the tooth is permanent, immediately try to replace it in the socket and hold it there using clean gauze or a washcloth. Don't put a baby tooth back in the socket — it can damage the developing permanent tooth below. If replacing the tooth in the socket isn't an option, place it in a clean container with milk, saline or cool water. As a last resort hold the tooth under your tongue to keep it moist. Get to a dentist's office immediately. Call the emergency number if it's after hours. **The faster you act — less than 30 minutes out of the mouth is optimal — the better your chances of saving the tooth.** To prepare for this type of emergency, purchase a commercially available kit (e.g., Save-A-Tooth), which contains a solution that may keep tooth root cells alive for hours until you can get to a dentist.

“The faster you act, the better your chances of saving the tooth.”

Oral Injury and Bleeding. If you've injured your mouth and there is bleeding, rinse gently to find the blood's source. Then put pressure on that area or use the gauze/tea bag techniques mentioned for broken teeth, left, which should bring bleeding to a halt within 10 to 15 minutes. If you can't get the bleeding to stop, call a dentist. **Head to the emergency room if a dentist is unavailable.** Even if the bleeding stops, consider visiting a dentist to ensure you don't need stitches or haven't injured a tooth.

Broken Dental Appliances. Whether they are dentures, braces or retainers, save the broken pieces for the dentist. **Don't try to glue anything back into place or bend protruding wires yourself.** You can use dental wax to keep wires or other protrusions from irritating your cheeks and gums, though. Before leaving on a trip, talk to your dentist or orthodontist to make sure you have wax on hand and know what to do if the dental appliance breaks.



hit the road with tooth-friendly munchies



While it may be tempting to reach for soda and candy when you're in relaxation mode, summer vacation is no time to take a break from good oral health. Whether you're taking a road trip or traipsing around a theme park, try a few of our picks for the best teeth-friendly summer snacks.

Instead of a bag of gummies...

Choose: Low-fat string cheese. They may not be as sweet as gummy bears, but the calcium-filled sticks will give you a similar chewy texture while helping to replace minerals your teeth have lost.



Instead of a candy bar...

Choose: Apple slices with peanut butter and a few dark chocolate chips.

This make-ahead snack will satisfy your sweet tooth while making your mouth healthier. The chewiness of the apples stimulates bacteria-reducing saliva flow, and tannins in the chocolate prevent bacteria from latching on to teeth.

Instead of sunflower seeds or peanuts...

Choose: Dry roasted edamame (soybeans). Using teeth to crack open shelled seeds and nuts is definitely a no-no. Instead try dried edamame to provide the salt and crunch you crave while getting the protein and calcium your teeth need. Bonus: Soybeans have fewer calories than sunflower seeds.

Instead of store-bought trail mix...

Choose: Your own custom mix. Premade trail mix often contains sticky dried fruits that cling to your teeth. Instead of loading up on store-bought stuff, make your own blend. It can include nuts, dark chocolate chips, non-sugary cereal pieces and mini pretzels.

Instead of soda...

Choose: Plain or flavored water or certain sugar-free beverages. Soda and sports drinks' high sugar content and harsh phosphoric and citric acids do a number on tooth enamel. Even diet soda and sports drinks aren't immune since they still contain the acidic ingredients. So take a close look at sugar-free beverages to choose one that is easier on your enamel.



summer staples that are damaging your teeth

You already know you need to protect your skin in the summer, but teeth also require extra attention when the seasons change. From chlorine damage to sweet seasonal food, summer can be tough on teeth.

THE CULPRIT: Sports Drinks

When the mercury rises, many people get outdoors and get active. Because warmer weather leaves quite the thirst to quench, exercisers often reach for sports drinks. The problem? Many of those drinks contain three times the tooth-eroding citric acid of soda, not to mention the excessive sugar found in non-diet versions. Your best bet is to stick to water or milk and, at the very least, switch to zero-calorie sports drinks.

THE CULPRIT: Ice Pops

Most are packed with sugar but not nutrition. The occasional icy pop won't hurt, but do your teeth a favor and try some frozen treats without added sugars and artificial dyes. Frozen grapes are tasty, or make "ice cream" by freezing a banana and throwing it into a food processor. If you do indulge in a brightly colored pop, following up with a glass of water can help rinse away the dye and sugars until you can brush again.



THE CULPRIT: Summer Sangria

The fruity mixture is delicious and refreshing, but the red wine base can leave teeth looking less than sparkling. To combat stains, wipe teeth with a tissue, swirl water or seltzer between glasses, or snack on veggies that serve as natural tooth scrubs (such as cauliflower). The fruity additions to many sangria recipes also add sugar and acids to the mix, so swirling with water after drinking is also a good way to rinse these substances off your teeth until your next brushing.



THE CULPRIT: Chlorine

The same swimming pool chemical that can make eyes burn and turn hair green also contains high amounts of acid that can erode teeth over time. For daily swims consider buying a mouth guard to limit the amount of chlorine that comes into contact with your teeth.

brushing up

Ever wonder what your dentist is *really* thinking? *Grin!* wanted to find out too, so we talked to **Dr. Suzy Press** from Children's Dentistry of Morristown in New Jersey.

IN A WORD

Favorite Floss Flavor: Mint

Electric or Manual Toothbrush? Electric



DR. SUZY PRESS

What's the best dental advice you've ever received? Only brush and floss the teeth you want to keep!

What's your favorite dental joke? A little boy was taken to the dentist and found that he had a cavity that needed to be filled. "Now young man," asked the dentist, "What kind of filling would you like?" "Chocolate, please!" replied the young boy.

Any funny stories from the dental chair? One of our favorite office stories was a little boy who had just lost a tooth. He was so concerned about the Tooth Fairy coming into his room at night, he hung his tooth in a bag on the outside of the front door of his house!

Do you brush and floss as much as you recommend? Absolutely. I brush first thing in the morning, after breakfast, after lunch, after dinner and right before I go to bed. And I always brush before I leave the house to make my breath feel fresh and clean.

If you'd like to recommend your dentist for a Brushing Up interview, email grin@deltadental.com with his or her name and contact information.

In your opinion which celebrities have the best smiles? Magic Johnson and Julia Roberts.

If you could tell patients to stop doing one thing, what would it be? Please stop eating sweet and sticky foods like gummies and fruit snacks. They stick to the surface of your teeth for a long time, making it easy for bacteria to feast. When the bacteria eat, they produce acid, which is what creates cavities.

Keeping You Covered

When choosing a dentist, certain considerations are fairly obvious: the dentist's reputation, the location of the practice, available hours. But it's also important to find out if the dentist you're considering is in-network or out-of-network.

In-network dentists have contracted with Delta Dental to provide services at pre-negotiated rates. That means you're likely to save more money by choosing an in-network dentist over an out-of-network dentist.