

# grin!<sup>TM</sup>

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

new year  
2015

volume 3, issue 4

**5** teeth  
whitening  
tips

why you should  
be “chew-sy”

the most memorable  
kisses of all time

conquer your  
dental phobia





# grin!

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## cavity-free calendar

### January

Here's an easy New Year's resolution that will make a big difference for your oral health: **Brush your teeth for two minutes twice daily.**

### February

When you're smooching your sweetie this Valentine's Day, think about this: **One-third of Americans have asked their partners to brush their teeth before a kiss.**

### March

#### Happy Women's History Month!

In 1864, Dr. Emeline Roberts Jones became the first woman to practice dentistry on her own after serving as her husband's dental assistant for nine years.



## two-word answers

**Q: What's a dental-friendly Valentine's Day gift?**

**A: Try flowers.**





## on topic with dr. kohn

don't let dental phobia dull your smile

Meet Delta Dental's Vice President of Dental Science and Policy, Bill Kohn, DDS. Formerly the director of the Division of Oral Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Kohn has timely tips and valuable insights to share as our resident dental expert.



If you've checked out from getting a dental exam for a while because you are afraid, it's time to check back in for a checkup. Studies show that people who see a dentist regularly have far fewer dental problems than those who only go when they have trouble. So, if you are trying to avoid dental issues, expensive treatment and perceived painful experiences, invest in prevention by seeing your dentist for good home care advice and early identification of any problem. Dental care has come a very long way in terms of pain management and keeping patients comfortable. Don't be afraid to talk to your dentist about any fears you may have. He or she will likely have several ideas for making your visits far more pleasant than you imagined. You can also check out the "Conquer Your Dental Phobia" article on [page 11](#) for a few pointers!

## readers ask, we answer



Emily writes:

**"I try to make sure my kids have healthy snacks, but it seems like the definition of *healthy* is always changing. What are some munchies that are nutritious, good for teeth and tasty?"**

Hi, Emily. It's true – sometimes it's hard to tell which snacks are really nutritious. For example, some gummy fruit snacks are made with real fruit juice, but that doesn't mean they're good for your kids. Anything sticky keeps sugars on teeth longer, so chewy treats are definitely not the best choice when it comes to oral health. Here are a few of our favorite tried-and-true healthy snacks:

- **Raw veggies provide nutrients to keep teeth strong.** Try keeping a stash of carrot and celery sticks, green and red pepper slices, chunks of jicama or snap peas in your fridge. Add some flavor by offering hummus as a dip.
- **String cheese is a good source of calcium.**
- **Nuts and seeds provide protein that will keep your kids full.**
- **Fresh fruit is a great option for kids with a sweet tooth** – you can even try making smoothies with fresh or frozen fruit, yogurt and milk.

Whatever health trends go in and out of style, fresh whole foods will always be good choices for your kids' teeth – and it's awesome that you're doing your part to help keep their smiles beautiful for years to come.

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

## the history of oral health: smile substitutes



**700 B.C.**

Early Etruscans used animal teeth to replace missing teeth. They banded remaining teeth together with gold rings and held new teeth in place with small pins.

**1774**

Alexis Duchâteau made the first set of porcelain dentures. Unfortunately, they chipped easily and were too white to pass for real teeth.



**1789**

Dr. John Greenwood used hippopotamus ivory to make dentures for George Washington. He left a hole in the dentures to accommodate the one original tooth Washington had left.



**1820**

A silversmith named Claudius Ash extracted teeth from the corpses of soldiers and criminals and used them to make dentures. We're more than a little thankful that modern dentistry has advanced!





## mouth-friendly recipe: **baked zucchini sticks**

*The next time you're craving french fries, try this version that substitutes zucchini for potatoes and baking for frying. Cooked zucchini is a good source of vitamin A, which is great for gum health. This recipe is not only tooth-friendly – it's overall health-friendly!*

### **Ingredients:**

3 medium zucchini, cut into 3" sticks  
1 tablespoon salt  
1 cup panko breadcrumbs  
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese  
1 tablespoon pizza seasoning or mixed Italian herbs

Parchment paper  
Cooking spray  
2 large eggs

### **Directions:**

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Help drain some of the water from the zucchini by placing it in a colander in the sink and sprinkling it with the salt. Let it sit for at least an hour, then rinse and pat dry.

Combine the panko breadcrumbs, Parmesan cheese and pizza seasoning in a small bowl and set aside. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and spray with cooking spray.

Crack the eggs into a bowl and whisk with a fork. Dip each zucchini stick in egg, then roll the zucchini in the crumb mixture and place on a baking sheet. Bake for 12 minutes, then turn over and bake for an additional eight minutes or until golden brown and crispy.



# THE MOST MEMORABLE

# kisses of all time

*While many people celebrate Valentine's Day with a dozen roses and a heart-shaped box of chocolates, one of the best romantic gestures – a kiss – is completely free. In honor of the heart-filled holiday, we're revisiting some of the most memorable kisses of all time to see what we can learn from them.*







### *Rhett Butler and Scarlett O'Hara, Gone with the Wind*

Clark Gable may have been one of Hollywood's most dashing leading men, but his oral health left something to be desired. Gable suffered from gum problems at a young age, and in 1933, at the age of 32, his dentist extracted most of his teeth. This left him with dentures, of course, which gave him a chronic case of bad breath. Vivien Leigh, his *Gone with the Wind* co-star, frequently complained about his bad breath. (Frankly, my dear, you should take better care of your dentures!)

Though bad breath has many causes, one possibility is

Gable's dentures didn't fit well or weren't being cleaned properly. Like real teeth, dentures that aren't cleaned well collect bacteria and food particles. This can result in breath that's less than kissable. Removable dentures should be cleaned thoroughly every day, just like natural teeth.

*"You should be kissed and often, and by someone who knows how."*

**Rhett Butler**  
*Gone with the Wind*

### *George Mendonsa and Greta Zimmer, V-J Day*

It was August 14, 1945. George Mendonsa was watching a movie at Radio City Music Hall when someone threw open the doors and told the audience that World War II was over. Mendonsa made his way to Times Square to celebrate with the masses and spied Greta Zimmer in what he thought was a white nurse's uniform. Overcome with excitement and relief, he planted a kiss on this complete stranger. A photographer happened to capture the moment, which was later made famous when it was published in *LIFE* magazine.

It turned out that Zimmer's attire wasn't part of a nurse's uniform – it was what she wore to her job as a dental assistant. Had Mendonsa consulted Zimmer, she probably would have advised him against kissing strangers. While we certainly can't blame Mendonsa for his enthusiasm, viruses and bacteria can easily spread from mouth to mouth, including viruses that can cause cold sores or mononucleosis, and the bacteria that cause strep throat or periodontal disease. It's best to be a little familiar with your kissing partner before you lock lips.



### *Ekkachai Tiranarat and Laksana Tiranarat, the longest kiss*

The longest kiss in history lasted a whopping 58 hours, 35 minutes and 58 seconds. The feat was achieved by Thailanders Ekkachai and Laksana Tiranarat and was recorded by Guinness World Records from February 12-14, 2013.

While smooching for nearly two and a half days is a bit excessive, a little bit of kissing actually stimulates saliva, which is good for your oral health. For instance, stimulating saliva flow by chewing sugar-free gum after meals has been shown to reduce the development of tooth decay because it helps wash out the mouth and rinse away food particles and bacteria that can cause cavities.



### *Princess Aurora and Prince Philip, Sleeping Beauty*

Though many of us are most familiar with the 1959 animated movie, *Sleeping Beauty* has been around for centuries. The tale dates back to the 1300s, but the most famous written version was captured in Charles Perrault's collection of folklore in 1697. In the popular version of the story, Princess Aurora is cast into a deep sleep and revived when Prince Philip gives her true love's kiss.

Princess or not, we're pretty sure Aurora suffered from some pretty serious morning breath after a nap that lasted hundreds of years. Morning breath happens because your saliva glands slow down while you're sleeping, so there's no fluid to wash away the bacteria that collect in your mouth overnight.

It's a little tough to combat morning breath because not much can be done to make your glands continue to produce saliva while you sleep (and you wouldn't want them to, anyway). What you can do is make sure your mouth is clean when you go to bed by brushing and flossing first.







# 5 teeth WHITENING tips

Thinking about brightening up your smile as part of your New Year's resolution? Here's what you should know before you glow.

- 1 Always talk with your dentist to learn the pros and cons of each method.**  
Your dentist will always give the best options for you and your teeth.
- 2 Previous restorations won't whiten.**  
Many people don't realize that previous restorations, such as crowns and fillings, won't whiten along with natural teeth.
- 3 Teeth whiteners do not correct all discoloration.**  
Teeth stained yellow or brown respond to whitening better than teeth that are gray. Additionally, tooth whiteners do not work well on teeth that have been stained by antibiotics.
- 4 There's a difference between over-the-counter whiteners and a professional dentist treatment.**  
An in-office treatment provided by your dentist is customized for your specific needs and the condition of your teeth. A dentist can make custom trays that fit your mouth perfectly, and can often provide stronger bleaching agents than those found in over-the-counter tooth whiteners.
- 5 "Whitening" toothpastes do not contain bleach like other whitening products. They simply use chemicals or polishing agents to remove surface stains, making teeth appear brighter.**  
Some dentists say fluoride is the only ingredient you really need in toothpaste. It protects teeth and can help repair the early stages of decay. However, if you want toothpaste that whitens, ask your dentist for a suggestion.



## CONQUER your dental phobia

*Do you suffer from a fear of the dentist? If so, you're not alone. Up to 58 percent of Americans report having at least some anxiety while at the dentist's office. The good news? There's no reason to suffer – from simple relaxation techniques to alternative therapies, we found a few tricks to try that may help you breathe easy in the dental chair. You should always discuss your anxiety with your dentist so he or she can adjust accordingly and provide recommendations such as the ones on the next page. And for a dentist's take on dental phobia, be sure to check out the article from our resident expert on **page 4**.*





## GUIDED IMAGERY

One option for combating dental anxiety is guided imagery. While at the dentist's office, try visualizing a peaceful setting, including sensory details. For example, picture yourself on a beach: Feel the warmth of the sun, hear the sound of seagulls and waves against a shore, smell the salt in the air. Allow yourself to be transported to this image. If other thoughts intrude, accept them and then return to your peaceful image. Practice this approach a few times before your appointment.

## RELAXATION EXERCISES

Practice relaxation exercises such as breath focus or meditation. When focusing on your breathing, get as comfortable as possible in the dentist chair, close your eyes and breathe slowly and deeply. Keep your mind as clear as possible. Breathe in for a count of three. Breathe out. Pause for a count of three. Continue this breathing method for several minutes. Meditation is similar, but has you choose a focus word to concentrate on, such as "calm" or "breathe."



## ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

According to researchers, alternative therapy options that may provide relief to patients with severe anxiety include acupuncture and hypnosis. As always, discuss options with your dentist to determine what will work best for your unique situation.

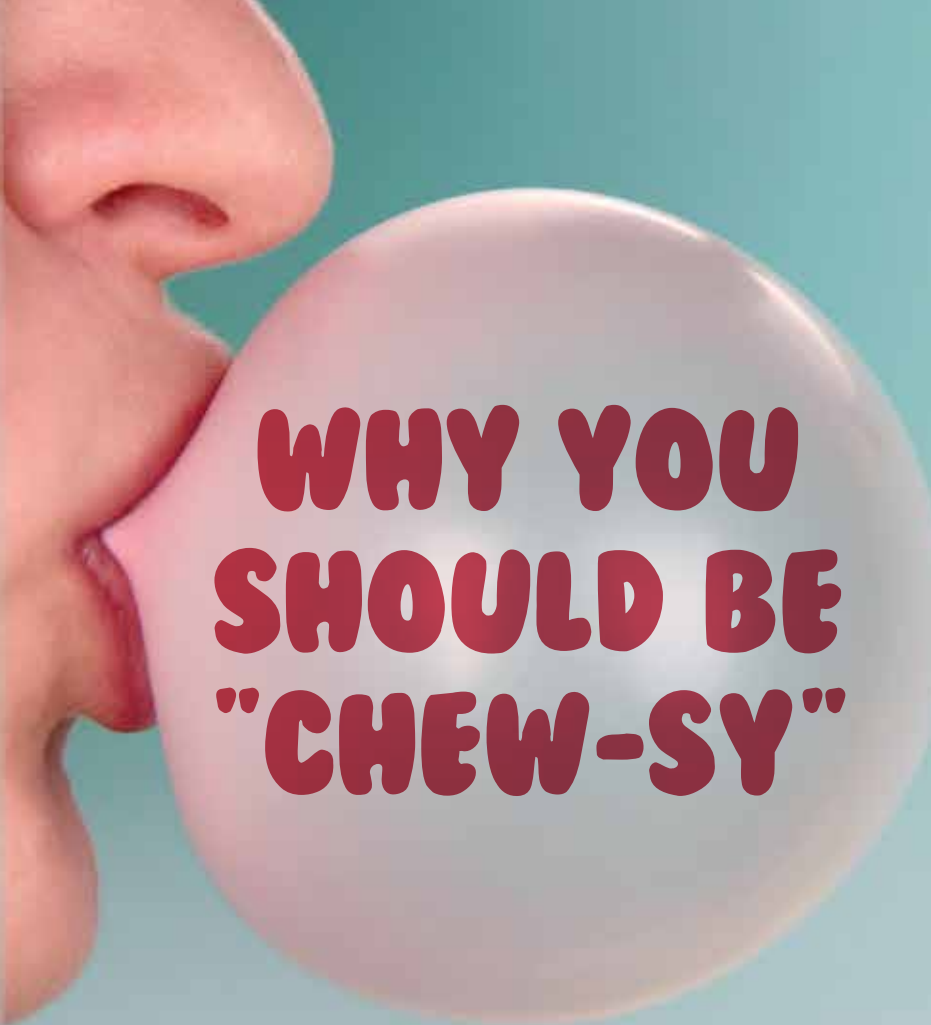
## IN-OFFICE RELAXATION AMENITIES

Some dental offices offer amenities to distract patients while they are in the dental chair. Noise-canceling headphones, music and television are just a few of the options that are becoming more common. There are even offices that offer spa-like treatments to help you relax during your appointment.

*If dental phobia has kept you from seeking oral health care, the new year is the perfect time to utilize some of these tricks to get back into a good routine.*







## WHY YOU SHOULD BE "CHEW-SY"

*Believe it or not, your dentist may want you to chew gum – as long as it's the right kind!*

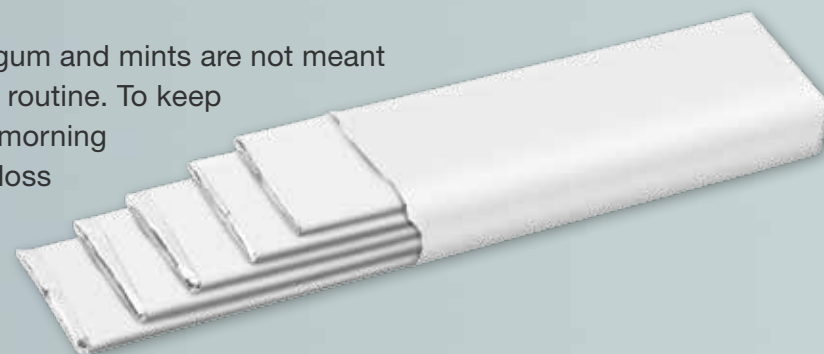
Chewing sugar-free gum helps reduce harmful acid levels in your mouth. The chewing action involved, as well as the flavor of the gum's artificial sweeteners, stimulates saliva flow, which helps wash away food particles and acid produced by bacteria. Sugar-free gum and mints can also increase salivary flow for people with dry mouth (xerostomia).

Chewing gum sweetened with xylitol is an even better option for your teeth. Studies show that xylitol, made from the bark of birch trees, doesn't contribute to tooth decay formation like normal sugars do. In fact, xylitol may even stop bacteria from doing damage.

When you eat something that contains sugar or starch, the bacteria in your teeth "feed" off of those substances, which allows them to produce harmful acids that erode tooth enamel. Those bacteria can't digest xylitol, which means they don't have an energy source that allows them to grow and produce acid.

A daily dose of six to 10 grams of xylitol is the best bet for bacteria prevention, which means six to 10 sticks of xylitol gum (the actual number depends on the concentration of xylitol) per day is optimal. Split the daily serving up into several five-minute sessions for maximum results.

Xylitol or not, just remember that sugar-free gum and mints are not meant to replace your regular flossing and brushing routine. To keep your smile healthy, remember to brush each morning and evening for two minutes each time and floss at least once daily.



## the importance of preventive dental care



Designed to stop oral health problems before they start, preventive dental care includes services such as cleanings, exams, fluoride treatments and sealants. In honor of National Children's Dental Health Month in February, there's no better topic to discuss – preventive care is essential to keeping children's mouths healthy.

It's also good for grown-up wallets – preventing or addressing issues before they get worse is much less expensive than treating severe dental problems.

Although preventive care is crucial to good oral health, Delta Dental's Preventive Dental Care Study found that not everyone is taking advantage of it for children.

- One-third of children ages 6-18 are at higher risk for tooth decay. More than 70 percent of those children do not receive two fluoride treatments per year.
- More than 60 percent of high-risk children ages 6-9 did not receive sealants on their first molars.
- More than 80 percent of high-risk children ages 10-14 did not receive sealants on their second molars.

Preventive care is often covered with no or a low deductible under most Delta Dental plans. If you haven't already, be sure to get your child's regular dental checkup scheduled!

Before your visit, go to [mydentalscore.com/deltadental](https://mydentalscore.com/deltadental) for a free oral health risk assessment that determines whether your child is at higher risk for tooth decay. Simply answer a few questions to receive an assessment that you can discuss with your pediatric dentist.

## keeping you covered: don't forget to flex

If you have a flexible spending account that allows you to put some of your pre-tax income into an account designated for medical expenses, don't forget that some dental expenses may be eligible as well.

This is a great time to have a discussion with your dentist about your oral health needs. Your dental office may be able to tell you which procedures are eligible for payment with flex account money, or you can contact your benefits specialist to learn more.





# brushing up



*Ever wonder what your dentist is really thinking? Grin! wanted to find out, too, so we talked to Delta Dental network dentist Dr. Jeannie Bath of Good Shepherd Ministries in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.*

## **What's the best dental advice you've ever received?**

Teeth are jewels, not tools!

## **Do you brush and floss as much as you recommend?**

Yes and no. I tend to go way overboard, but there have definitely been times in my life I have slacked off.

## **What's your favorite dental joke?**

My husband is a pharmacist and I'm a dentist, so my friend's dad calls us "The Pusher and The Puller." A total Dad joke!

## **Do you have a favorite floss flavor?**

Yes – mint.

## **What dental problem do you see the most in your office?**

I'm sad how often people "run out of gas before going to the gas station" – they wait until a little cavity gets big enough to hurt, or wait to treat gum disease until teeth get loose.

## **If you could tell patients to stop doing one thing, what would it be?**

Stop drinking sugar such as soft drinks, juices and energy drinks!

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