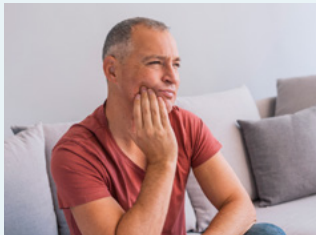


# THE ORAL HEALTH EXPERT

DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA

APRIL 2020

## OPEN WIDE SEE WHAT'S INSIDE



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## 4 Easy Ways to Protect Your Smile



**Most people don't realize how easy it can be to incorporate healthy behaviors into their regular routines. Here are some simple ways to enjoy better oral health.**

### **Brush your teeth correctly twice daily.**

Almost a third (32%) of adults brush their teeth less than twice a day,<sup>1</sup> increasing their risk of cavities and gum disease. Brushing twice a day for two minutes each time is the most effective way to remove plaque.

When you brush, make sure you reach every tooth surface above and slightly below the gumline. Never brush too hard because it can damage your teeth and gums. And always use a fluoride toothpaste to help prevent tooth decay.

### **Wear a mouth guard.**

Anyone playing contact sports like field hockey, lacrosse, soccer, basketball, football, wrestling and ice hockey should use a mouth guard to protect against mouth injuries, such as lost or cracked teeth, damage to the root or crown and torn lips and cheeks.

### **Protect your lips outdoors.**

Protecting your lips from cancer-causing sun exposure is just as important as wearing sunscreen on the rest of your body. Apply a water-resistant lip balm that contains SPF 30 or higher when outside, even on cloudy days. Remember to reapply at least every two hours—even more often when swimming.

### **Use your teeth only to chew foods.**

Avoid using your teeth as tools to open bottles and packages or to chew on pens, pencils, fingernails and ice. If you use your teeth in unnatural ways, you can crack or chip them, damage fillings, cause toothaches and wear down tooth enamel.

These are just a few of the good oral health habits you can practice daily. In addition to brushing correctly, protecting your mouth and watching your diet, make sure to floss daily and avoid tobacco.

# WHAT IS A DENTAL EMERGENCY?



Accidents can happen at any moment—even when you’re relaxing at home. It’s important to understand the types of concerns that need emergency care and which ones you can handle on your own. A dental emergency is often when treatment is needed to save a tooth, stop bleeding or lessen severe pain.

## It can wait.

- Routine exams and cleanings - These are considered preventive and non-emergency.
- Minor toothache - While you may eventually need to visit the dentist, a toothache can usually be resolved with a cold compress and pain reliever.
- Cavities - It’s important to take care of cavities before they get worse; however, they are not an emergency.

## Keep calm and call your dentist.

- A crown falls off - You don’t need to rush to the dentist, but you should give them a call. A broken or missing crown can lead to sensitivity and other issues.
- Denture adjustments - If your dentures have stopped functioning properly, give your dentist a call. Dentures are essential for everyday life.
- Orthodontic issues - If you have braces and break a wire or bracket, use dental wax on sharp edges and call your dentist.
- Dental care before critical medical procedure - If you have dental treatment scheduled due to an upcoming critical medical procedure, this is considered essential and you should keep your appointment.

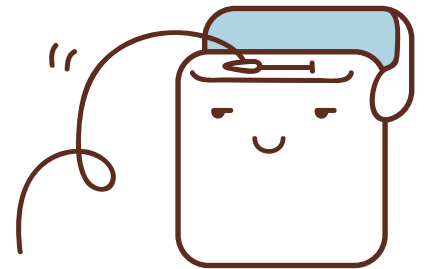
## Emergency treatment needed.

- Uncontrolled bleeding - If you are uncontrollably bleeding from your lips, tongue or gums, head to your dental office or closest ER.
- Severe pain or swelling in your mouth - This could be a sign of an abscess or infection, which may be life-threatening.
- Mouth trauma - If there is trauma to the face that may compromise airways, it should be treated immediately.
- A knocked out permanent tooth - Get to the dentist as soon as possible. Don’t touch the tooth’s root but try putting it back in the socket. If you can’t, put the tooth in milk until you get to the dentist.

# SMILE STATS



The world record for most teeth at birth goes to a UK baby who was born in 1990 with 12 teeth.<sup>2</sup>



Jerry Seinfeld is known for his meticulous dental habits. He was featured on a 1993 Dental Health Advisor poster with the quote “Look Ma, I flossed!”<sup>3</sup>



If you need a root canal, you’re not alone. More than 15 million root canals are performed in the U.S. every year.<sup>4</sup>

# Decrease Your Risk of Oral and Oropharyngeal Cancer



About 10,750 Americans are expected to die from oral and oropharyngeal (mouth and throat) cancer this year. And approximately 53,000 people will be diagnosed with these cancers.<sup>5</sup> Oral cancer has several known risk-factors and, if caught early, is treatable. Knowing these risk factors can help you avoid and spot this type of cancer early.

## Risk factors you can't control.

While you can't control them, it's important to be aware of these risk factors:

- Aging increases your risk of oral cancer, especially after age 50.
- Gender influences risk, as men are diagnosed twice as often as women. This is likely due to higher tobacco and alcohol usage.<sup>6</sup>
- A previous bout with mouth or throat cancer can make you susceptible to a recurrence, most often within two years after original treatment.
- A family history of mouth, throat or other cancers increases risk.
- A weakened immune system from diseases at birth, AIDS, medicines used after organ transplants and more make it harder to fight off cancer.

## Risk factors you can control.

Some risk factors are linked to behavior that can be controlled:

- All tobacco use can lead to mouth and throat cancer.
- Drinking more than four alcoholic beverages per day increases your risk.<sup>7</sup>
- A lack of fruits and veggies in your diet can lead to a deficiency of vitamins and antioxidants that protect against cancer.
- Excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun or artificial sunlight like tanning beds, increases the risk of lip and oral cancer.
- Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the leading cause of cancers of the tonsils and base of the tongue.<sup>8</sup>

## How to reduce your risk.

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to help reduce the risk of developing mouth and throat cancers:

- Quit using all forms of tobacco. If you don't use, don't start.
- If you drink alcohol, only do so in moderation (up to two drinks per day for men of all ages and one drink per day for women).
- Protect your lips from the sun by shading your face with a hat and wearing at least SPF 30 lip balm.
- Avoid tanning beds.
- See your dentist regularly—your exam should include an oral cancer check. Early diagnosis is a major factor in successful treatment.
- Perform self-checks monthly by looking for sores, irritations, red or white patches and lumps that last more than two weeks.
- Eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day.
- Help avoid HPV by talking to your physician about when you or your children should be vaccinated.

# MOUTH-HEALTHY RECIPE: BAKED FALAFEL

## Ingredients:



1 tbsp. olive oil, 1 15-oz. can chickpeas (drained and rinsed), ½ cup white onion (finely diced), 1 cup fresh parsley,



1 cup fresh cilantro, 1 tsp. sea salt, ¼ tsp. black pepper, 1 tsp. garlic powder, 1 tsp. coriander, 2 tsp. cumin, 2 tsp. baking powder, 2 tbsp. ground flaxseed



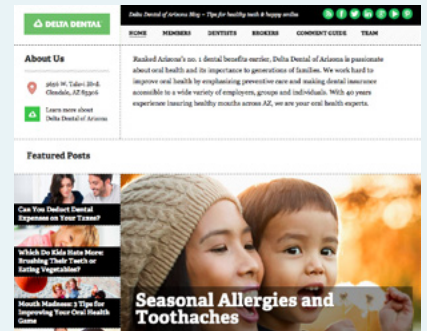
## Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 F.
2. Grease a large baking sheet with olive oil. Cover with lid and reduce heat to simmer for 20 minutes.
3. Add chickpeas, onion, parsley and cilantro to a food processor and blend until combined but still chunky.
4. Add remaining ingredients and mix until well combined with a fine texture.
5. Take 2 tablespoons of mixture at a time and roll into balls.
6. Place balls on baking sheet and bake for 20 to 30 minutes until golden brown.
7. Serve in a whole-grain pita, on a salad or eat it as-is.

## WANT MORE ORAL HEALTH TIPS AND NEWS?

VISIT THE DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA BLOG

[deltadentalazblog.com](http://deltadentalazblog.com)



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## SOURCES

- <sup>1</sup>Delta Dental 2019 Adult's Oral Health & Well-Being Survey
- <sup>2</sup><https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/most-teeth-at-birth>
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- <sup>4</sup><https://vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/revolutionizing-root-canal-treatment/>
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