

THE ORAL HEALTH EXPERT

DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA

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Do You Have Dry Mouth?



Does your mouth feel dry all the time? If so, you could be experiencing dry mouth. Dry mouth is common, particularly among older adults and especially with older women. The main cause of dry mouth is medication use. Hundreds of prescription medications are known to cause dry mouth. It can also be a side effect of illnesses including diabetes, anemia, Sjogren's syndrome and more.

Discomfort associated with dry mouth is typically the first symptom. Many people with dry mouth also experience:

- Problems with food ingestion and a need to drink water frequently during meals
- Changes in taste, with a predominance of bitter and salty taste
- Bad breath
- Burning sensation of the tongue and/or lips
- Presence of "milky" saliva
- Increased cavities

Here are some questions to consider if you are trying to figure out if you have dry mouth:

- Do you feel that the saliva in your mouth is too little or too much?
- Does your mouth feel dry when eating?
- When eating, do you need to drink liquids to aid in swallowing?
- Do you have trouble swallowing?

It's important to tell your doctor and dentist if you think you suffer from dry mouth. Depending on the cause of dry mouth, your provider can recommend a variety of treatments. If you suffer from dry mouth, always keep water handy, chew sugarless gum, and avoid tobacco, caffeine, acidic drinks (like orange juice) and alcohol.

A Guide to Dental Insurance for Infants and Children



When a child is born, getting medical coverage is a priority. But it's also important to have dental insurance, too. This quick guide will help you set your child up for a lifetime of good oral health.

When and Why to Get Coverage

Babies usually start getting teeth around 6 months and cavities can develop as quickly as teeth appear, so consider getting dental insurance as early as possible. Your dentist will check to see if your child's smile is off to a good start and provide useful information about nutrition and tooth development.

By age 5, more than 20% of children have had cavities and almost 10% have untreated tooth decay.¹ Childhood cavities can cause pain, difficulties eating and speaking, and infections that can damage permanent teeth developing under the gums. Poor dental health in childhood is likely to carry into adulthood. Fortunately, most childhood dental disease is preventable. Dental insurance makes care more affordable and children with dental insurance are twice as likely to receive dental services than those without it.²

What to Look for in Coverage

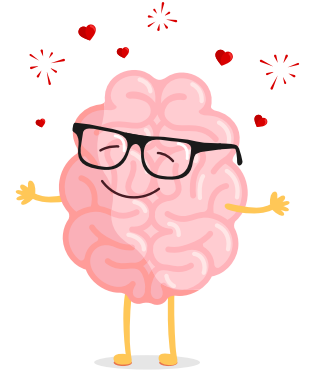
As you compare plans, make sure you review what is and isn't covered. Look for plans that cover all or most of the cost of preventive care (exams, cleanings, X-rays) and basic care (fillings, tooth extractions). Most plans cover fluoride treatments and dental sealants for kids but check to make sure they are included.

Review the potential costs under the plan, including deductibles, out-of-pocket limits and coinsurance. Also look for a dental carrier that has a large network of dentists, including pediatric dentists and specialists. To take full advantage of in-network savings, check if your preferred dentist is in-network.

Future Needs to Consider

Your children's permanent teeth will begin to come in around age 6. Coverage for dental sealants is vital at this time because permanent back teeth should be sealed right away. Around age 7, your dentist may suggest your child visit an orthodontist to assess future needs. If your child is likely to need braces, you may want a plan that covers orthodontic care.

SMILE STATS



Smiling activates the release of neuropeptides in the brain that are known for fighting off stress.³



The dinosaur with the biggest smile was the Edmontosaurus, who had more than a thousand teeth.⁴



The Guinness World Record for "most teeth in the mouth" is held by a man from India who has 37 teeth.⁵

The Best (and Worst) Movie Snacks for Your Smile



The holidays and colder weather are great excuses to stay inside, enjoy a snack and watch movies. But when it comes to oral health, are your favorite movie snacks praised or slammed by the experts? Here's our review!

Movie Snacks with Rave Reviews

Crunchy fruits and veggies get a big thumbs up! Try them with Greek yogurt dips, which you can make by adding dry ranch dressing mix to plain Greek yogurt for a savory vegetable dip or combining yogurt with cinnamon, nutmeg and chopped nuts for an easy-to-prepare fruit dip.

Satisfy your urge to crunch with protein-packed nuts that can help prevent tooth decay. Or if you crave something salty, crispy zucchini chips provide a healthy alternative to high-carb foods that can cause cavities. You can also try making spicy roasted chickpeas (see recipe on page 4) for a boost of nutrients!

For a sweet treat, try plain dark chocolate. Dark chocolate has less sugar than milk or white chocolate and washes off teeth easily.

When it comes to washing down snacks, drink water, milk or green tea. Water helps rinse food from teeth and milk is high in calcium. Green tea can kill bacteria before it damages teeth and contains antioxidants that may help prevent oral cancer.

Snacks You May Want to Avoid

Unlike dark chocolate, most candy gets poor reviews due to high sugar content. While chocolate covered raisins may be a classic movie candy, they're sugary and sticky, so they can get caught in teeth and cause damage. Starchy snacks like potato chips and crackers can also get trapped between teeth, where they convert to sugar and can cause tooth decay.

Sipping soda throughout a movie can coat teeth with cavity-causing sugar and acids that wear away tooth enamel. Those acids make even diet soda a poor choice. Dark-colored sodas can also discolor teeth.

What About Popcorn?

On the positive side, this ultimate movie snack is a whole grain that's high in filling fiber. Consumed in moderation, it has fewer carbs and calories than many salty snacks.

If you enjoy popcorn, avoid unpopped kernels, which can crack teeth and damage dental restorations. Also, watch out for hulls that can get trapped under the gums and cause an abscess. Always brush and floss after eating popcorn!

MOUTH-HEALTHY RECIPE: SPICY ROASTED CHICKPEAS

Ingredients:



2 cans (15 ounces each)
garbanzo beans



2 Tbsp. olive oil



1 tsp. ground cumin



1 tsp. chili powder



½ tsp. cayenne pepper



½ tsp. sea salt

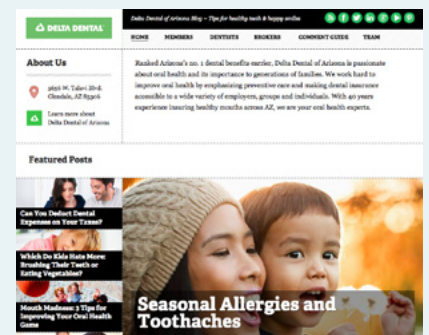
Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 F.
2. Drain cans of garbanzo beans and rinse with water.
3. Spread beans on paper towel and let dry for 30 minutes.
4. Line a cookie sheet with foil or parchment paper and spread dried beans evenly on sheet.
5. Bake for 40 to 60 minutes until crunchy.
6. Transfer to a bowl and mix with olive oil.
7. Stir in seasonings.
8. Enjoy!

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SOURCES

¹<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db307.htm#fig1>

²[https://jada.ada.org/article/S0002-8177\(16\)30904-7/fulltext](https://jada.ada.org/article/S0002-8177(16)30904-7/fulltext)

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⁴<http://kids.guinnessworldrecords.com/stories/the-man-with-the-most-teeth-vijay-kumar#:~:text=Vijay%20Kumar%20from%20India%20has,anyone%20else%20in%20the%20world.>

⁵<https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/most-teeth-in-a-mouth>