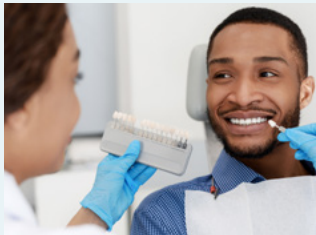


THE ORAL HEALTH EXPERT

DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA

FEBRUARY 2021

OPEN WIDE SEE WHAT'S INSIDE



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What Are The Most Common Causes of Tooth Decay?



Without treatment, tooth decay can cause permanent damage to your teeth. This damage is caused by acids that are released from the bacteria found in plaque. The decay process is typically slow and may take months or even years to develop into a cavity. The rate of tooth decay depends on several factors, including simply being more genetically prone to cavities. However, here are a few other risks to watch out for:

- **Frequent sugar consumption:** This includes sugary beverages, snacks and refined carbohydrates (such as candy, cereal, crackers, cookies, soda and fruit juice).
- **Poor oral hygiene habits:** It is recommended that you brush at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, floss once a day and visit the dentist every 6 months.
- **Orthodontic brackets and bands:** While these appliances are meant to straighten teeth, they can make it difficult to reach all tooth surfaces when brushing and flossing. Ask your dentist for recommendations on how to effectively brush and floss with braces.
- **Existing fillings and crowns:** Fillings and crowns may create roughness or small gaps at the tooth's surface, increasing prevalence of plaque.
- **Lack of adequate saliva flow:** Dry mouth can be caused by smoking, certain medical conditions or medications. The lack of saliva puts your mouth at higher risk for bad bacteria to stick around.
- **Eating disorders, such as bulimia:** The acids from your stomach can wear away at tooth enamel and create an opening for tooth decay to develop.

One of the best ways to fight tooth decay is to visit your dentist regularly for check ups and professional cleanings. Your dentist can work with you to address any existing cavities or decay, determine your risk factors for developing future decay and come up with a long-term prevention plan.

Thinking of Whitening Your Teeth? Talk to Your Dentist First



Feel like your pearly whites aren't so white? Many products claim to whiten teeth, but there could be more than meets the eye, particularly when it comes to store-bought whitening products.

If you want to try an at-home, teeth-whitening product, see your dentist first. Your dentist can help rule out any dental problems, such as gum disease or tooth decay, that may be causing your teeth to look dull. Your dentist can also give you pro advice on how different whitening products work and what might be the best solution for you!

Do Teeth Whiteners Actually Work?

Most tooth whitening products work to some degree. It's important to know which will perform best for you and what to expect. Your dentist can answer questions like how much whiter can you make them, what are the adverse effects (like gum irritation or tooth sensitivity), how long will it last, and what else you can do to keep your smile bright.

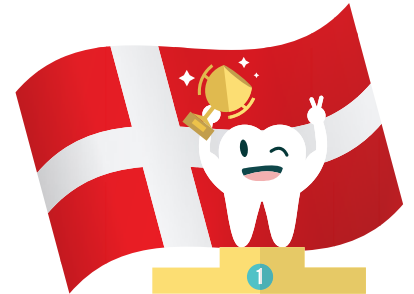
What Are Common Teeth Whitening Options?

Your dentist may suggest you try one of these teeth-whitening solutions:

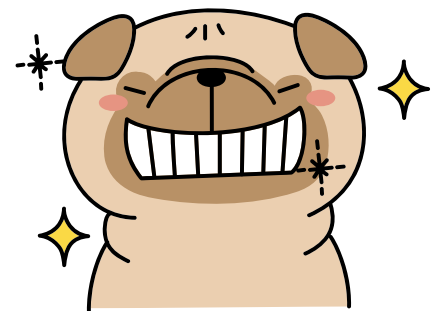
- Custom trays that fit perfectly in your mouth and can be used at home. These usually contain stronger bleaching agents than over-the-counter tooth whiteners.
- An in-office tooth-whitening treatment that uses a powerful bleaching solution.
- Over-the-counter products, which may take longer and require some personal dedication.

No matter which option you choose, remember that teeth whitening can cause tooth and gum sensitivity in some people. Your dentist is the best resource for which products will work best and keep your mouth healthy.

SMILE STATS



Denmark, Germany and Finland top the charts for countries with the best overall dental health.¹



Dogs don't consume as much sugar as humans do, so it's rare for dogs to get cavities.²



Strawberries can help remove plaque and surface debris from teeth, leaving behind a bright smile.³

How to Keep Children From Grinding Their Teeth



Regular teeth grinding or clenching, also known as bruxism, can begin as soon as a child's teeth appear. It occurs more frequently in children, adolescents and young adults than in middle-aged and older adults—and is particularly common in toddlers and preschoolers.

Why do Kids Grind Their Teeth?

Teeth grinding usually takes place while sleeping, but children can also grind their teeth when awake. Although there is often no apparent cause for grinding or clenching, it can be associated with:

- Pain from teething or an ear infection.
- Exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Misaligned teeth.
- Stress or anxiety.
- Medications for some conditions, including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
- Nighttime breathing or sleep problems.
- Medical conditions such as autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy and gastrointestinal reflux disease.

In addition, teeth grinding occurs more frequently in families with a history of grinding or clenching.

What Should You do if You Suspect Teeth Grinding?

- Visit your dentist to see if your child's teeth are being damaged by grinding or clenching. Depending on the situation and age of your child, your dentist may recommend a night guard.
- Schedule an appointment with your child's primary care provider if your dentist suspects a medical condition could be a contributing factor.
- If you think your child is experiencing stress or anxiety, try to find the source of the problem.
- Make bedtime as relaxing as possible. Create a peaceful environment by reading a book, listening to relaxing music, having quiet time or encouraging your child to take a warm bath or shower.

Many children outgrow teeth grinding or clenching around the time their permanent teeth start to come in. However, you should not delay seeing your dentist if your child is experiencing teeth grinding at any age to make sure it isn't causing any permanent damage.

MOUTH-HEALTHY RECIPE: STRAWBERRY AND CREAM CHEESE TOAST

Ingredients:



4 pieces whole-grain bread, toasted



1/4 cup plain cream cheese



8 strawberries, chopped

Directions:

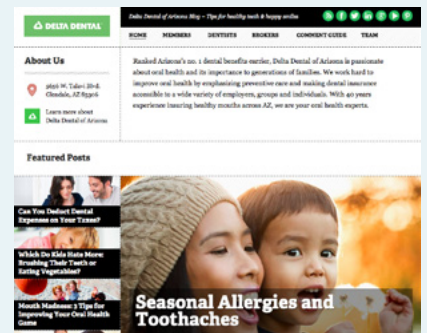
1. Spread cream cheese over toasted bread.
2. Top with strawberries.
3. Snack away!



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deltadentalazblog.com



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SOURCES

¹<https://www.beckersdental.com/news-and-analysis/33391-top-10-counties-with-best-dental-health-denmark-ranked-no-1.html>

²<https://www.petmd.com/dog/general-health/5-interesting-facts-about-your-dogs-teeth>

³<https://www.colgate.com/en-us/oral-health/teeth-whitening/strawberry-teeth-whitening-and-other-weird-whitening-methods>