

THE ORAL HEALTH EXPERT

With the lovely summer weather, we explain how to protect your smile in the sun and explore the importance of vitamin D.

DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA

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HOW THE SUN CAN BE GREAT FOR YOUR SMILE



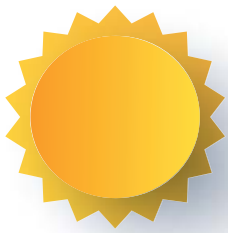
Going outside to bask in the sun isn't just fun - it also provides a healthy dose of vitamin D! That's good for both your overall health and your oral health.

Calcium is often praised for its many health benefits like strengthening bones and teeth, but your body won't experience those benefits if it doesn't have enough vitamin D to absorb the calcium.¹ Getting adequate amounts of calcium and vitamin D helps reduce bone loss over time and may also decrease your chances of losing teeth.² On the flip side, not getting enough calcium could increase your risk for osteoporosis. Developing osteoporosis can cause the jaw to weaken, leading to possible tooth loss.³

So how do you make sure your body gets the vitamin D it needs? UVB rays from sunlight and vitamin D supplements are the main sources, but they aren't the only ones.⁴ Some foods naturally contain vitamin D like cheese, egg yolks, beef liver and fatty fish (tuna, mackerel and salmon).⁵ Because natural foods rich in vitamin D are somewhat limited, manufacturers sometimes fortify products like milk, margarine and yogurt.⁶

The amount of vitamin D you absorb from the sun varies significantly based on factors like where you live, air quality, skin color and more.⁷ Additionally, the amount you need largely depends on your age. Check with your physician to determine if you're getting enough or if you should take a supplement.⁸

For the sake of your smile, get outside and enjoy the sun! Just make sure to apply plenty of sunscreen and lip balm with an SPF 30+ rating to protect your skin and lips from sunburn.



Protecting your smile in the sun



July is UV Safety Month, so it's a great time to read up on the importance of sun protection. You might be surprised to learn that one of the areas you should pay close attention to is your smile.

Because of the thin layer of skin that contributes to your lips' red color,⁹ they're particularly vulnerable to UV rays. Plus, your lips are low in melanin – a pigment that helps protect skin from the sun.¹⁰ Your lower lip has an even higher risk of sunburn due to its shape and angle to the sun.¹¹

With their increased sensitivity, your lips can be affected by sun exposure right away and in the years to come. Immediate symptoms of a sunburn include redness, swelling or tenderness of the lips. They can also develop small, white blisters filled with fluid.¹² If you make a habit of not using sun protection, you may increase your risk of developing skin cancer on your lips.¹³

One of the best ways to protect your lips is to avoid direct sunlight during peak hours when the sun is most intense. These hours range from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. standard time and 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daylight savings time.¹⁴ If you are going to be in the sun, consider blocking UV rays with a hat, wear sunscreen and apply lip balm with an SPF 30+ rating. SPF lip balm needs to be applied more frequently than sunscreen. Keep it nearby so you can reapply about once every hour or after eating, drinking and licking your lips.¹⁵

If you forgot lip balm and find that your lips are feeling the burn, try these options for at-home care.¹⁶ First, stay out of the sun while your lips are healing. For treatment, apply aloe vera to relieve the burning sensation, use a cold compress to soothe them, take an anti-inflammatory to reduce pain and moisturize to help the skin heal. If these at-home options aren't working, you may need to seek medical help. Call your physician immediately if your lips or tongue are swollen or if you develop a rash.

While we often think of SPF protection as a summertime staple, it's just as important in other seasons. Be sure to keep sunscreen and SPF 30+ lip balm handy all year round for when you decide to head outside.

SMILE STATS



UV rays still affect skin on cloudy days. Wear SPF 30+ sunscreen and lip balm when you're outside for extended periods.¹⁷



People ages 9 to 18 require the most calcium. Make sure your kids are getting enough!¹⁸



Aloe vera may reduce recovery time from sunburns. If you forget your SPF protection, apply aloe vera for burn relief (even on your lips!).¹⁹



WATER - GOOD FOR YOUR BODY AND YOUR SMILE!



Water is one of the most important nutrients for the body. It hydrates, detoxifies, and supports many essential chemical processes in your body. But did you know it can also help keep your mouth healthy?

Saliva, which is composed of 98 percent water, lubricates and neutralizes harmful bacteria that could potentially damage your mouth. When your body is not getting enough water, your salivary glands produce less saliva creating an ideal breeding ground for the microbes that can cause bad breath, gingivitis and cavities.

Drinking plenty of fresh water is the best way to stay hydrated.

Many popular energy and sports drinks contain sugar, which can have negative effects on your teeth. If you do choose to drink a beverage containing sugar, consider these smile-saving tips.



Drink beverages containing sugar through a straw held at the back of the mouth, away from the teeth.







Rinse your mouth with water after drinking acidic beverages.



Reduce the frequency of ingesting these types of drinks.

Whether you're working out or just hanging out, be sure to drink plenty of water and take proper precautions if you choose alternative beverages. It's the best way to do what's good for your mouth!

MOUTH-HEALTHY RECIPE: BLUEBERRY FROZEN YOGURT

Ingredients:	Directions:
 3 cups fresh blueberries	After enjoying the hot weather, cool off with a treat that'll keep your smile shining. The yogurt in this refreshing recipe has calcium to support teeth and strengthen bones. Plus, the blueberries are full of vitamin C, which can help keep gums healthy. ²⁰
 2 cups low-fat Greek yogurt	
 1/2 cup agave nectar	
 1/4 teaspoon pure vanilla extract	

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