

THE ORAL HEALTH EXPERT

Changes in seasons can mean changes in eating habits. We'll focus on the best farmers market finds and which fruits can be hard on your teeth.

DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA

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3 Swim Safety Tips to Avoid Dental Emergencies in the Pool



Although most people remember the most important rule of water safety—always watch kids around water—few realize that a lot of pediatric dental emergencies can happen near the swimming pool.

That's why experts at Delta Dental of Arizona say it's important for adults to institute some preventive rules to avoid pool-related dental emergencies. Some of the most common injuries occur when kids misjudge distance when jumping in the pool and hit their mouth on the ledge or slip and fall on a wet deck.

Here are three helpful smile safety tips for swimmers:

- If your child is a young adrenaline junkie, make sure he or she jumps into the pool from safe areas, like diving boards or platforms, and that the area is clear of other swimmers.
- If your little one likes to cannonball, flip or dive into the swimming pool, teach him or her to make sure the landing spot is deep enough! Many traumatic dental injuries are the result of an impact to the face from the side or floor of swimming pools.
- Encourage walking instead of running when around the pool. Running on wet, slippery cement or pool decking can result in a headfirst tumble.

Even if a child follows all of the pool rules, accidents can still happen. Knowing how to respond to a chipped tooth or bleeding in the mouth is something to discuss with your pediatric dentist before an incident happens.

Additionally, excessive exposure of the tooth enamel to the chlorine in many pools can cause brownish discolorations. If your child is a competitive swimmer and in the water more than 6 hours per week, talk to your dentist about the best ways to avoid swimming calculus.

For more smile tips and resources, including what to do in a dental emergency, visit the Delta Dental of Arizona Blog at deltadentalazblog.com.



THE ABSOLUTE BEST FARMERS MARKET PICKS (AND SOME OF THE WORST)



Do you love shopping at your local farmers market? You're not alone. They're so popular that there are now more than 8,700 farmers markets nationwide.¹ While it should be easy for you to find one near you, it's not always as easy to decide what to buy.

Let's take a tour of some popular farmers market choices that are good for your oral health.²

Produce

It's no surprise that fruits and veggies dominate the list of recommended foods. Not only do they have high nutritional value, but many also have high water content, which helps wash away bacteria from your teeth. Reach for crunchy apples, pears, carrots, cucumbers, celery and broccoli that are effective teeth cleaners. For an instant treat, grab tasty fruit on a stick. Try to avoid highly acidic fruits—including oranges, limes, lemons and grapefruits—that can damage tooth enamel.

Stock up on dark, leafy greens, like spinach, kale and more. They're full of vitamins, minerals and calcium, which are important for strong, healthy teeth and tissues. They also contain folic acid, a type of B vitamin that has numerous health benefits, including possibly keeping gums healthy in pregnant women.³

Nuts

With all the delicious ready-to-eat foods at most farmers markets, there are plenty of treats to tempt you. Choose nuts instead of sugary and starchy snacks. Pick wisely by watching out for nuts roasted with sugar, though!

Most nuts are full of protein and some, like peanuts, contain vitamin D and calcium, which are good for your smile. Their crunch also stimulates saliva to help clean your teeth.

Dairy products

Cheese and yogurt are especially delicious when they are fresh from the farm. In addition to their great taste, dairy products strengthen your teeth with high doses of calcium. Cheese also raises the pH (lowers the acid) in your mouth and reduces your risk of tooth decay, according to a study published in the Journal of the American Academy of General Dentistry.³

Beverages

It's always a good idea to stay hydrated during the summer and the farmers market is no exception. Pass by the sugary sweet and acidic carbonated beverages and have a bottle of water handy to quench your thirst. Water will keep your mouth clean between bites, which is especially important if you splurge on a sweet treat!

Milk and fortified soy drinks provide the same teeth-building benefits as other dairy products. But if you go for a smoothie, choose wisely. Smoothies can pack a lot of nutrients into one drink – but some may also be loaded with added sugar and highly acidic fruits.

SMILE STATS



Lancaster Central Market in Pennsylvania has been around since 1730. Makes you wonder if Ben Franklin ate there.⁴



One healthy fruit⁵ is not so easy on your nose. Durian's odor has been described as "turpentine and onion, garnished with a gym sock."⁶



Gummy candies are not only sugary and sticky, they're also coated with the same wax that makes cars shiny.⁷

Should you avoid some fruit?



With so much produce in season right now, it's a good time to consider the effects of fruit on your smile.

Not only are fruits better for you than sweets, they can also reduce your cravings for sugary snacks. Most fruits are mouth-friendly, especially crisp ones like apples that help clean plaque from your teeth and freshen breath.⁸ However, some fruits may have surprising effects on your smile.



Highly acidic fruits⁹

Lemons, limes, oranges, pineapples, grapefruits and grapes are all high in acid, which can wear down your tooth enamel and leave them more vulnerable to cavities. The acid found in these fruits can also irritate mouth sores.

These fruits all contain vitamin C – an important antioxidant that can help prevent gum damage and fight bacteria. However, you can substitute much less acidic fruits like cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelons and bananas, that are still high in vitamin C.



Berries¹⁰

While blueberries are one of nature's superfoods, known for their antioxidants, their violet coloring can leave super stains on your tooth enamel. Other delicious berries such as strawberries, raspberries and blackberries can also stain your teeth.

It's best to brush your teeth (or rinse with water if your toothbrush isn't handy) right after enjoying berries.



Fruit juice¹¹

Whole fruits are a better choice than fruit juice. Fruit juice is a much more concentrated source of sugar and sometimes acids as well. The juicing process also removes the beneficial fiber found in whole fruit. If you do drink fruit juice, swish with water immediately after.



Dried fruits¹²

These fruits sometimes contain added sugar and they're sticky. That means they cling to your teeth, keeping sugars in contact with your teeth longer, which can lead to tooth decay.

Because they still have many healthy nutrients, you don't need to give up acidic fruits entirely. Just make sure you:

- Enjoy them in moderation.
- Don't leave them in your mouth for long periods.
- Eat them at mealtime rather than snacking on them throughout the day to minimize the time your teeth are exposed to acids.
- Rinse with water and chew sugar-free gum afterward to help get rid of lingering acid.

MOUTH-HEALTHY RECIPE: BAKED ZUCCHINI CHIPS¹³

Ingredients:



½ cup flaxseed meal, ¼ cup loosely packed fresh basil leaves



¼ cup kosher salt, ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese



½ pound zucchini cut into ¼-inch-thick rounds, 1 tablespoon olive oil, Cooking spray

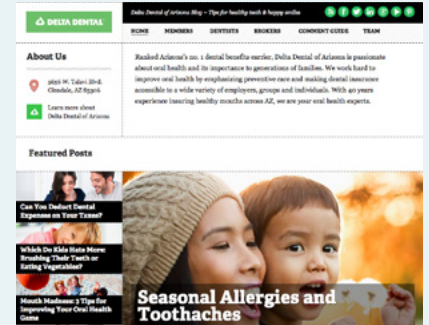
Directions:

Preheat oven to 450° F. Using a food processor, finely grind the flaxseed meal, basil leaves and salt. Stir together flaxseed meal mixture and cheese in a medium bowl. Toss zucchini rounds with oil. Dredge zucchini in flaxseed meal mixture one at a time, pressing gently to adhere. Place rounds in a single layer on a baking sheet coated with cooking spray. Bake 30 minutes or until browned and crisp. Serve hot.

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SOURCES

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