

THE ORAL HEALTH EXPERT

DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA

JUNE 2021

OPEN WIDE SEE WHAT'S INSIDE



P.2 Wear a Mouthguard in Sports with a Bat, Ball or Stick



P.3 5 Smile-Friendly Ways to Live Longer



P.4 Healthy Recipe: Beet Hummus

Using Your Dental Benefits While Traveling



As we begin to plan our summer vacations, it's important to understand how our dental benefits follow us in our travels. A tooth emergency can happen any time. Thankfully, most Delta Dental plans work anywhere in the United States. Some plans even cover emergency care out of the country.

What is a dental emergency?

There are some dental concerns that can wait to be treated. However, others require immediate attention by a dentist. A dental emergency is when treatment is needed to save a tooth, stop bleeding or lessen severe pain. Common dental emergencies may include a knocked out or missing permanent tooth, swelling in the mouth, bleeding that won't stop or a painful toothache.

What does my plan cover?

Each plan offers a variety of coverage. Some plans cover dental emergencies in the U.S. Other plans will cover you anywhere in the world. You can usually review your specific plan offerings by reading your dental benefits booklet.

While it's important to know what is covered, it's also good to know what isn't. Dental coverage often doesn't apply to emergency room or urgent care visits. These are usually covered by your medical plan instead. Prescription medicine for dental pain or infections also fall under medical benefits.

How do I find a dentist while traveling?

If a tooth emergency occurs while you're on vacation in another state, don't sweat it! Visit deltadentalaz.com/find to locate a network dentist near you. While you can visit any licensed dentist in an emergency, you will save the most money if you see a dentist who is in-network.

If you visit an out-of-network dentist, you may have to pay up-front for services. Keep in mind that out-of-network fees are typically higher, so you may pay more for care than with an in-network dentist. You will also need to send your claim form to Delta Dental for reimbursement.

Wear a Mouthguard in Sports with a Bat, Ball or Stick



Did you know that baseball and basketball have the highest incidence of sports-related dental injuries in children ages 7 to 17 than any other sport?¹ Wondering why?

Mouthguards are not required for participation in these sports, even though the National Federation of State High School Association's Sports Medicine Advisory Committee recommends that athletes wear a mouthguard if playing a sport with a bat, ball or stick.

How Mouthguards Work

Before high school football players were required to wear mouthguards and facemasks, 50% of players' injuries were oral-facial. Now they represent less than 1% of injuries.² This is because a mouthguard helps absorb the shock from a blow to the face that might otherwise result in an injury to the mouth or jaw. It can limit the risk for chipped or broken teeth, internal damage to a tooth, tooth loss, and even a broken jaw. A mouthguard also can protect the soft tissues of your cheek lining, tongue, and lips.

Choosing a Mouthguard

Ideally, a mouthguard should be protective, comfortable, tear resistant, odorless, tasteless, not bulky, cause minimal interference with speaking and breathing, and have excellent retention. There are three basic types of mouthguards available:

- **Stock mouthguards** are relatively inexpensive and have a pre-formed shape. But since the fit can't be adjusted, they're less effective than a fitted option. And, sometimes they don't stay in place, which may cause impediments in breathing and speech.
- **Boil-and-bite mouthguards** can be purchased at many sporting goods stores and can be molded to the individual's mouth, usually by boiling the mouthguard in hot water to soften the plastic.
- **Custom-made mouthguards** are considered the best option. Since your dentist makes them from a mold of your teeth, they fit tightly and correctly. Although a custom mouthguard is the most expensive option available, it's a solid investment when compared with the thousands of dollars in dental work it can take to replace a lost tooth.

Although mouthguards are only mandatory for some youth sports, such as ice hockey, football and lacrosse, dental professionals recommend they be worn for all athletic activities where there is a strong potential for contact with other participants or hard surfaces.

SMILE STATS



According to most sources, dental floss was created in 1815 by a New Orleans dentist.³



Just like teeth and gums, the tongue is covered with bacteria and should be brushed regularly.⁴



Stay hydrated by drinking the recommended 15.5 cups of water per day for men and 11.5 cups for women.⁵

5 Smile-Friendly Ways to Live Longer



Life expectancy has gone way up in the last century. People born in the U.S. today can expect to live an average of nearly 80 years.⁶ While good genes are important to longevity, healthy behaviors are actually more influential in helping people survive into old age. Many of the same practices that can help you live longer also assist in keeping your smile healthy for a lifetime.

1. **Eat a balanced diet:** Fruits and vegetables, lean protein, whole grains and dairy products make up a healthy diet that's linked to longevity and a healthy smile. The nutrients and antioxidants from plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and whole grains appear to be particularly important in promoting a long life and great oral health.
2. **Maintain a healthy weight:** Obesity (a body mass index higher than 30) shortens life expectancy and is a risk factor for early death. Excess weight is also a sign of overeating and consuming too many unhealthy foods, which puts you at risk for cavities, gum disease and other oral health issues.
3. **Exercise and reduce stress:** Exercise can reduce the risk for disease and limited mobility, while raising life expectancy. Aim to get at least 30 minutes of activity a day, which can include walking, jogging, strength training and more. Exercise and meditation can also reduce stress. Stress makes it harder to fight off infections that can cause disease in your mouth and the rest of your body.
4. **Practice great oral hygiene:** Brushing your teeth with fluoride toothpaste at least twice a day for two minutes each time, flossing daily and visiting your dentist regularly are smart ways to maintain great oral health. But did you know oral health is also connected to good overall health? Studies have found that people with gum disease may be at increased risk for heart disease, diabetes and other health problems.
5. **Avoid tobacco and limit alcohol:** Tobacco use and heavy alcohol consumption have been linked to many life-threatening diseases. Tobacco can cause heart and lung diseases, cancer, and stroke. And the average smoker dies 10 years earlier than nonsmokers.⁷ Along with an increased risk of oral cancer, tobacco usage can damage teeth and gums, and cause tooth loss, bad breath and yellow teeth.

Drinking alcohol is linked to liver, heart and pancreatic disease, along with an increased risk of early death. In addition, alcohol can cause cavities due to sugar and dry mouth. It can also lead to gum disease, oral cancer and more.

MOUTH-HEALTHY RECIPE: BEET HUMMUS

Ingredients:



- 2 small red beets
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves
- 15 ounces cooked chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 tablespoons tahini
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2-3 tablespoons warm water



- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon coriander
- Sea salt and ground black pepper, to taste

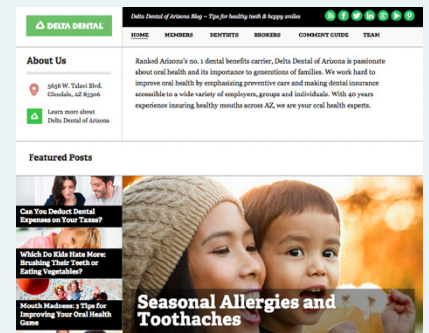
Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 F.
2. Drizzle beets with olive oil. Wrap beets and garlic cloves in foil and place on a baking sheet.
3. Roast beets for 30 to 40 minutes or until tender.
4. After removing pan from oven, let beets sit until cool enough to handle. Peel beet skin under running water, then chop into smaller pieces.
5. Place beets in a blender with garlic, chickpeas, tahini, olive oil, lemon juice, water, cumin and coriander. Blend until smooth or your preferred consistency.
6. Chill hummus in the refrigerator. Garnish with parsley, pine nuts or sesame seeds if desired.
7. Serve as a dip with whole-wheat pita bread or fresh veggies. Enjoy!

WANT MORE ORAL HEALTH TIPS AND NEWS?

VISIT THE DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA BLOG

deltadentalazblog.com



CONNECT
with us



SOURCES

¹<https://www.aapd.org/research/oral-health-policies--recommendations/prevention-of-sports-related-orofacial-injuries/>

²<https://www.osaa.org/docs/health-safety/nfhsmouthguardpositionstatement.pdf>

³<https://oralb.com/en-us/oral-health/dental-floss-history/>

⁴<https://www.healthline.com/health/dental-oral-health/brushing-your-tongue>

⁵<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/water/art-20044256#>

⁶<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2016/06/can-you-lengthen-your-life>

⁷https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/fast_facts/index.htm