

# THE ORAL HEALTH EXPERT

DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA

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## OPEN WIDE SEE WHAT'S INSIDE



**P.2** 4 Steps to Choosing the Right Toothbrush



**P.3** What Is an Occlusal Guard?



**P.4** Healthy Recipe: Grilled Chicken with Homemade Dry Rub

## Why Positive Surprises Can Make You Smile



Whether it's a nice note or a thoughtful gift, a pleasant surprise can make your day.

Whether this unexpected event makes you happy or not, you feel surprised and try to make sense of it. Welcomed surprises make you smile because the pleasure center of the brain has a more intense response to something pleasurable when it is unexpected. Here are some ways to keep your smile healthy for your next pleasant surprise:

- **Invest in a dental plan.** People with dental coverage are 40% more likely to see a dentist at least once a year, compared to those without coverage.
- **Practice great oral health every day.** Remember to brush your teeth twice a day and floss daily.
- **Go to the dentist before you are in pain.** Gum disease, and even cavities, can be relatively painless in their early stages. It's important to keep regularly scheduled checkups.
- **Know what snacks can do to your smile.** Starchy foods can get stuck between teeth and break down into cavity-causing sugars. If you do indulge, chew sugar-free gum and drink water to wash away left-over food.
- **Keep floss on the go.** It's easy to stash extra floss in your car, office, purse or pocket.

Practice these oral health habits and you may be surprised how much they help you smile.

## 4 STEPS TO CHOOSING THE RIGHT TOOTHBRUSH



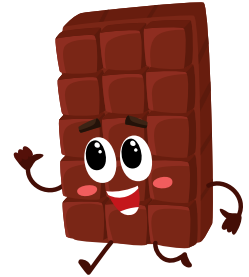
When shopping for toothbrushes, do you put much thought into what's best for you or your children? Here's why you should: Your toothbrush can be a major factor in helping you brush more effectively and making your oral hygiene routine more pleasant.

Regardless of which toothbrush you select, make sure to get a new toothbrush or toothbrush head every three to four months. Or, sooner if the bristles are frayed. A new toothbrush may remove up to 30% more plaque than one that is three months old.<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, choosing a toothbrush you like will make you more inclined to brush for the full two minutes recommended twice a day.

Here are four helpful steps for choosing your next toothbrush:

1. **Decide between a manual or powered toothbrush.** If you brush correctly with fluoride toothpaste, both types of toothbrushes can be effective. An electric or battery powered toothbrush may be preferred if you have difficulty handling a manual toothbrush. Plus, many of them have special features like timers and pressure indicators that let you know if you're brushing too hard.
2. **Select a soft-bristled brush.** Soft-bristled toothbrushes do a good job of removing plaque and debris and are easier on your gums and enamel than a toothbrush with stiffer bristles. The American Dental Association recommends soft-bristled brushes with angled or multi-layered bristles to get a good clean without harming your teeth.
3. **Consider a small head (in most cases).** A toothbrush with a small head may help you clean your hard-to-reach back teeth. A standard-sized manual toothbrush head that's a half-inch wide and one-inch tall works for most people. But, people with larger mouths may find a larger head toothbrush to be a better fit. Electric toothbrush heads are generally smaller than manual toothbrush heads and may have different speeds for sensitive teeth.
4. **Determine if you need a special handle.** Your toothbrush handle should be easy for you to grip and move around your mouth. If you have difficulty with a standard handle, you may want to consider a thicker handle, a handle with a non-slip grip, an angled neck or a toothbrush aid that slips on the handle, making it easier to grip.

# SMILE STATS



A smile can generate the same level of brain stimulation as up to 2,000 chocolate bars.<sup>1</sup>



The first mass-produced toothbrush was invented in prison in 1770 by an Englishman named William Addis.<sup>2</sup>



The human mouth contains more bacteria than there are people on Earth.<sup>3</sup>

# What Is an Occlusal Guard?



The word “occlusal” refers to the surfaces of your teeth that are used for chewing. When you damage those surfaces by clenching or grinding your teeth, an occlusal guard may be recommended by your dentist.

These protective appliances are sometimes called nightguards or bite guards and they fit over your upper and lower teeth. They help prevent damage to your teeth that can be caused by grinding and clenching, an oral habit known as bruxism.<sup>5</sup>

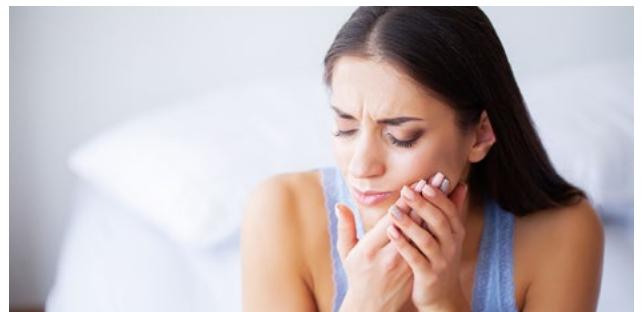
These guards don't necessarily stop you from grinding or clenching, but they do help protect the tooth surface from damage. They can also help alleviate the symptoms associated with bruxism, like jaw pain, head and neck muscle pain, tooth wear and fracture, tooth sensitivity and headaches.

Occlusal guards look like sports mouthguards but are often less bulky and can be custom-made by your dentist to fit your mouth exactly.

## Do you need an occlusal guard or nightguard?

Occasional teeth grinding or clenching should not be a major concern, but consistent, long-term clenching and grinding can lead to pain, broken teeth, loss of tooth enamel and loss of teeth. Some symptoms that may indicate the need for an occlusal guard include:

- Teeth clenching and grinding
- Jaw pain or stiffness
- Fractured or worn-down teeth
- Loose teeth
- Temperature-sensitive teeth
- Headaches, earaches or toothaches in the morning
- Facial pain
- Disrupted sleep
- Sleep partner complains about the noise



If you have questions about whether you need an occlusal guard, talk with your dentist. He or she will be able to diagnose any damage and help guide you through treatment options.

# MOUTH-HEALTHY RECIPE: GRILLED CHICKEN WITH HOMEMADE DRY RUB

## Ingredients:



4 chicken breasts



1/2 tablespoon smoked paprika



1 tablespoon ground cumin



1 tablespoon garlic powder



1/2 teaspoon sea salt



1 tablespoon ground coriander



1 tablespoon olive oil



1 teaspoon black pepper

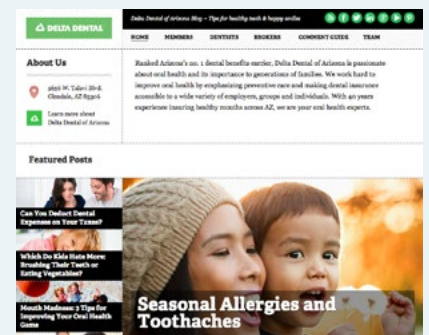
## Directions:

1. Preheat grill to medium-high heat of about 375°F to 400°F.
2. Mix spices and olive oil in a small bowl.
3. Rub spice mixture on both sides of the chicken breasts.
4. Grill each side of the chicken for 4 to 7 minutes or until internal temperature reads 165°F.
5. Remove chicken breasts from the grill and let them rest for 5 minutes before serving.
6. Enjoy!

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## SOURCES

<sup>1</sup><https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/changepower/201605/the-9-superpowers-your-smile#:~:text=Smiling%20elevates%20your%20mood%20and,it%20up%20when%20you%20smile.>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/t/toothbrushes>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.dentistrytoday.com/mouth-contains-more-germs-than-total-number-of-people-on-earth/>

<sup>4</sup><https://oralb.com/en-us/oral-health/why-oral-b/electric-toothbrushes/types-of-toothbrushes/>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/t/teeth-grinding>