

# THE ORAL HEALTH EXPERT

DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA

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## What is Preventive Dental Care?



Preventive dentistry is dental care that helps a patient avoid oral disease and maintain a healthy smile. This includes daily brushing with a fluoride toothpaste flossing and maintaining a healthy diet—along with visiting the dentist for routine cleanings and exams.

### Which services are considered preventive dentistry?

Preventive care includes services that reduce the likelihood of developing oral conditions that can be more expensive to treat and uncomfortable to experience:

- Oral exams and X-rays
- Professional cleanings
- Fluoride treatments
- Sealants
- Space maintainers for children

Preventive dentistry allows your dentist to monitor your oral health, prevent new disease and catch signs of problems early.

### Preventive dentistry can reduce your risk of:

- Tooth decay (cavities)
- Gum disease (periodontal disease)
- Receding gums
- Tooth sensitivity
- Losing teeth
- Health issues related to poor oral health, like heart disease

Preventive dental care is covered to varying degrees by most dental insurance plans. However, it is important that you check with your dental carrier to understand what services are covered under your plan.

# Give Yourself the Gift of Great Oral Health



It can be challenging to maintain a healthy smile over the holidays. Less-than-healthy treats are hard to resist! And you may not have as much time to devote to your oral and overall health. Follow these tips for great oral health during the holidays and give yourself a gift that keeps giving all year long.

## Eat right

Cavity-causing candies, desserts, breads and other sugar and carb-filled foods are everywhere this time of year. Here's how to keep from overindulging in foods that can damage your smile:

- Try snacking on apples, turkey or nuts throughout the day so you won't be tempted to eat too much at one meal.
- Don't linger near the food table so you won't mindlessly snack as you chat.
- Keep produce on the menu. Most fruits and veggies are filling and good for you.
- If there's a favorite food you only eat at the holidays (like pumpkin pie), take a small portion, eat it slowly and savor it.
- Give yourself 20 minutes before you decide to eat a little more. By then, you may realize you're full—and have leftovers for the next meal!

Make sure you also drink plenty of water to clean your teeth and avoid dry mouth.

## Stay active

There are plenty of excuses to skip exercising during the holidays. However, exercise can help reduce stress to keep your mouth and body healthy. Look for opportunities to be active where you can:

- Take a brisk walk after a meal.
- If you're stuck indoors, search for free online workout videos.
- Use resistance bands for quick strength exercises whenever you have a few free minutes.
- Plan a 10-minute exercise routine you can do in your bedroom to unwind at the end of the day.

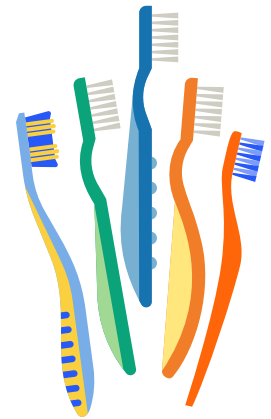
## Keep up with your oral health routine

Maintain a daily dental care routine and take advantage of preventive dental coverage before the end of the year. If you had to cancel or reschedule your dental appointment this year, get back on your regular schedule of dental visits so you can keep smiling all season.

# SMILE STATS



Have you ever noticed your tastes change? Taste buds have an average lifespan of 10 days.<sup>1</sup>



Toothbrushes come in all colors, but the most popular toothbrush color is blue.<sup>2</sup>



Narwhals or “unicorns of the sea” don't have teeth in their mouths, but their tusk is actually an overgrown tooth.<sup>3</sup>

# Every Part of Your Mouth Plays a Part in Oral Health



**Your mouth shapes the appearance of your face and helps you eat, speak and breathe. It takes many parts working together to handle so many important jobs. Get to know the functions of the different parts of your mouth, and you'll gain a greater appreciation for the importance of great oral health.**

- **Teeth** – Most adults develop 32 permanent teeth. Your teeth tear and chew your food, help give your face its shape and play a major role in speech.
- **Jaws** – The upper (maxilla) and lower (mandible) jaws help support your teeth and assist in chewing and speaking.
- **Gums** – Gums are soft pink tissues that cover and protect the alveolar bone, the part of the jawbone that supports your teeth.
- **Lips and cheeks** – Lips and cheeks work together to assist with speech and making expressions.
- **Tongue** – The tongue is a key component in chewing, swallowing and forming words.
- **Frenums (lingual and labial)** – The lingual frenum is a flap of tissue that connects the tongue to the floor of the mouth. The labial frenum connects the upper lip to the gums.
- **Palate** – The hard and soft palates make up the roof of the mouth. They play a role in speech and separate the mouth from the nasal cavity, allowing food and air to go through different passages.
- **Uvula** – This small flap of tissue hangs at the back of the soft palate. The uvula helps the soft palate keep food and drink from entering the nasal cavity.
- **Temporomandibular joints (TMJ)** – The temporomandibular joints are located on both sides of your head. They work together to open and close your mouth and move your lower jaw forward and from side to side. In addition, they help you chew, speak and swallow.
- **Salivary glands** – There are 6 major salivary glands and hundreds of tiny minor salivary glands in your mouth that produce saliva to break down food and make it easier to swallow.
- **Oral mucosa** – Working with salivary glands, the oral mucosa keeps your mouth moist and clear of food and other debris. It also defends your body from germs that enter your mouth.

Your mouth plays an important role in keeping your entire body healthy. Protect your oral health and keep your smile shining bright.

# MOUTH-HEALTHY RECIPE: BAKED SALMON

## Ingredients:



1 salmon fillet (about 5 ounces)



1 tablespoon olive oil



1 1/2 teaspoons Old Bay®  
or seafood seasoning



1 tablespoon butter

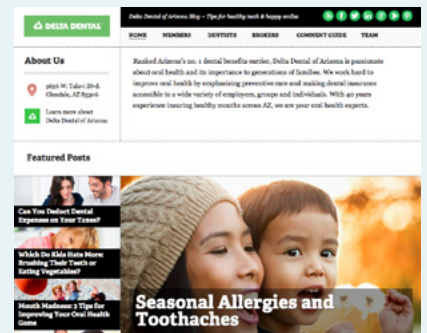
## Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 F.
2. Coat a baking sheet with foil or parchment paper and drizzle with half of the olive oil.
3. Put salmon on the foil or parchment paper and drizzle with remaining olive oil and sprinkle with seasoning.
4. Divide butter into thin pats and place 3 to 4 pieces on salmon.
5. Bake 13 minutes or until salmon is cooked through and flakes easily with a fork.
6. Enjoy!

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[deltadentalazblog.com](http://deltadentalazblog.com)



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## SOURCES

<sup>1</sup><https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16843606/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.lifehack.org/431796/8-things-you-probably-didnt-know-about-toothbrushes>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20151026-the-tusks-of-narwhals-are-actually-teeth-that-are-inside-out>