Give your teeth some extra flossing and smile your best smile because Tooth Fairy Day is February 28! This special day is a great way to start a discussion about oral health with kids and have a little fun at the same time. To celebrate, let’s take a look at a few Tooth Fairy traditions from around the world:

- In Argentina and Sweden, boys and girls leave the baby teeth they lose in a glass of water by their bedside. While they sleep at night, Magical Mouse visits to get a sip of water and trade the tooth for a few coins.
- Many children in Europe celebrate much like American kids by leaving a tooth under their pillow for overnight collection. However, you won’t find the Tooth Fairy in Europe - her brownie and elf friends have taken up the task.
- Filipino children may be some of the only children in the world who look forward to a visit from a rat! In the Philippines, Tooth Rat asks that kids leave baby teeth on windowsills so he can pick them up and move on quickly to the next house.
- In Colombia and South Africa, another little mouse performs duties similar to the Tooth Fairy. Children may leave their baby teeth under their pillows or deposit them in warm slippers.
- Baby teeth make lovely gifts in Chile and Costa Rica, where mothers craft charms out of the pearly white beauties and give them back to the children. It may sound a little odd, but people have been making and wearing enamel jewelry for centuries!

Looking for other ways to make oral health fun? Be sure to visit www.theoriginalatoothfairypoll.com. You’ll also find results of the annual Tooth Fairy Poll that surveyed parents to find out how much money was left under pillows in the past year. Feel free to take the poll yourself!
Hail to the Teeth

Being president may come with a lot of perks, but good oral health isn’t necessarily one of them. While you’re celebrating past Commanders-in-Chief this Presidents’ Day, take a moment to review the dental dilemmas they faced – and then salute how far our oral health knowledge has come.

George Washington, of course, was famous for his false teeth. They weren’t wooden, though. Washington had several pairs, which were made from materials such as hippopotamus ivory, lead, and gold. ¹

John Adams had a presidential-sized sweet tooth. He also believed that induced vomiting could cure any number of illnesses. The combination of these two habits may have resulted in the loss of his teeth as he aged. Unlike his predecessor, Adams refused to wear dentures. With no false teeth to aid in his speech, Adams was nearly incomprehensible in his later years. ²

It’s said that Abraham Lincoln was afraid of dentists – and it’s easy to see why. Prior to his presidential days, Lincoln experienced an anesthetic-free tooth extraction in his home state of Illinois. The dentist used a little too much force and ended up removing a piece of Abe’s jawbone, as well as the tooth! When Lincoln later had a dental procedure done in Washington, D.C., he brought his own anesthesia. ³

Franklin Delano Roosevelt had a partial denture to replace his two front teeth. His son, James, once said that it wasn’t uncommon to find his father hunting for his misplaced denture.

But it’s not all doom and gloom: Ulysses S. Grant knew the importance of good oral health. During the Civil War, Grant once headed out to fight for six days. He took nothing with him but a toothbrush. ⁴

And, at the age of 75, Thomas Jefferson wrote, “I have not yet lost a tooth to age.” ⁵ Not bad for the 1800s – but we’re still thankful for modern dentistry.

SMILE STATS

The science of kissing is called philematology. ⁶

The world’s largest chocolate was a 30,540-lb Hershey’s Kiss. ⁷

The 1926 film, Don Juan, holds the record for most kisses (127) in a single movie. ⁸
Every February more than 40,000 dentists and volunteers across the nation participate in Give Kids A Smile Day, an American Dental Association (ADA) program that provides dental services to underserved children. Dentists and other industry professionals volunteer their time and services to give approximately 450,000 kids screenings, treatments and education.

Although the official date is the first Friday in February, Give Kids A Smile events can be scheduled throughout the year. Call the ADA at 1-844-490-GKAS (4527) to find a Give Kids A Smile event near you.

Even if you’re not taking part in this event, we have another way you can help kids smile: Teach them to love the dentist. Get your child started on the right foot by making a dentist appointment before he or she turns 1-year-old (or six months after the first tooth erupts). This first visit serves as an “icebreaker” to help the dentist become a familiar face to your child. It also helps you and your child understand what happens at pediatric dental appointments. The dentist can provide guidance on age-appropriate oral hygiene, nutrition, baby bottle and pacifier use, teething, normal growth and development, and other advice that can get your child on the way to a lifetime of good oral health.

Of course, it is important to find an office that meets your needs. Look for an office that is parent and child friendly and welcomes your child at an early age. Some dentists specialize in pediatric dentistry. If yours does not, ask to see how familiar and comfortable they are with seeing toddlers.

There are steps you can take to help an older child who is reluctant to go to dental appointments as well. First, be positive and calm in talking about the visit. Let your child know that the dentist likes to help children feel comfortable and keep their teeth strong and healthy. Leave the details of the visit to the dentist and his or her staff. Be sure to inform the dentist that your child feels anxious about the appointment. The dentist can help him or her feel more at ease with procedures by explaining what will take place, even if it’s something as simple as, “We’re going to clean your teeth today by using these tools.”

Finally, don’t forget to praise your child for a job well done! Behaving well at the dentist’s office should be rewarded with kind words and perhaps a small surprise, such as stickers or trinkets.
**MOUTH-HEALTHY RECIPE: DARK CHOCOLATE-COVERED STRAWBERRIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients:</th>
<th>Directions:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 oz dark chocolate</td>
<td>Wash and dry strawberries well. Line a sheet pan with waxed paper. Place the dark chocolate in one microwave-safe bowl and the white chocolate in another. Melt the dark chocolate in the microwave at half power for one minute, and then stir. Continue until melted, and then repeat the process for the white chocolate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 oz white chocolate</td>
<td>Hold a strawberry by the stem and dip it into the dark chocolate, twisting until the whole berry is covered. Place the dipped berry on the waxed paper to dry. Once all of the berries are covered, dip a fork into the white chocolate and drizzle over the strawberries. Let the chocolate set for about 30 minutes. Enjoy!</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 lb strawberries with stems (about 20)</td>
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**SOURCES**

3. [https://books.google.com/books?id=aTWFkCABAAQ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=aTWFkCABAAQ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false)

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