

grin!

help your kids
have healthy
smiles in 2014

plan your
dental
budget

save money
in 2014

5 things to
look for in
a dentist

resolve not to
become a statistic



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feature article

9 help your kids have healthy smiles in 2014



cavity-free calendar

January

Make someone's day on **January 24 for National Compliment Day.** May we suggest admiring their beautiful smile?

March

When you're snacking on green treats for **St. Patrick's Day on March 17,** don't forget about leafy greens. Veggies such as spinach and kale provide your teeth and bones with much-needed calcium.

February

Celebrate **National Tooth Fairy Day on February 28!** Even if there are no loose teeth in your house, visit theoriginaltoothfairypoll.com for oral health tips, fun facts on Tooth Fairy traditions from around the world and much more!



two-word answers

Q: By what age should a child first visit the dentist?

A: Age 1.





real Delta Dental smiles

Get to know the folks who work hard every day to make sure you're getting the most out of your Delta Dental benefits. Meet Emily Firman, senior program officer at the Washington Dental Service Foundation.

Have your oral health habits changed since you started working for Delta Dental?

I'm much more likely to floss after lunch than ever before. It's not every job that provides emergency floss for employees.

What's your most satisfying moment on the job? We put a lot of work into planning community meetings. I love that moment when you leave an event knowing that people are more committed to improving the oral health of their community.

How do you spend your time outside work? I became engaged while working here, so, yes it sounds trite, but I spend a lot of time with my fiancé. We like to go for walks, host dinner parties and game nights, and spend time getting to know our families.

How do you feel about dental visits? Dental visits are an important part of my health routine. Finding the right dentist is always key – someone I trust to give good treatment advice but who also practices near where I work.

Tell us one of your favorite quotes. It's a little something by Mary Oliver about life: "So this is how you swim inward. So this is how you flow outwards. So this is how you pray."

readers ask, we answer

Traci writes:

"My husband snores like a freight train and it's really disrupting my sleep. Short of kicking him out of bed, is there anything I can do?"

Hi, Traci. Although you're in good company – snoring is a problem for 30 to 45 percent of Americans – it sounds like you and your husband are both in need of a fresh start in the sleep department. Good news: There are options that can help bring restful nights back to your household.

Before you send your husband to the couch for good, here are a few options he should discuss with a physician or dentist:

- A mouthguard-like device can help open up the airway by repositioning the jaw or keeping the tongue in a forward position. This option can also be helpful for people who grind their teeth.
- Continuous Positive Air Pressure (CPAP) is a tube connected to a mask that keeps air passages open for easy breathing.
- Uvulopalatoplasty is a surgery that removes certain tissue in the throat to help clear the airway. It takes three to five visits to complete.

Here's hoping you're both on your way to a good night's sleep soon!

Have a question you'd like us to answer? Send your question to grin@deltadental.com, and it could be featured in an upcoming issue!

the history of oral health: people who have insured their mouths for millions

British comedian **Ken Dodd** insured his distinctive teeth for £4 million.

Aquafresh insured **America Ferrera's** smile for \$10 million when the actress was the brand's spokesperson.



Dreyer's, an ice cream producer, once insured its taste tester's tongue for \$1 million.

Front man **Gene Simmons** of the band KISS once insured his famously long tongue for \$1 million.

Costa Coffee insured the tongue of tester **Gennaro Pelliccia**, master of coffee, for £10 million.



mouth-friendly recipe: apple slice sandwiches

Satisfy your urge for a sweet snack with these amped-up apple slices.



Ingredients:

- 1 Granny Smith apple (or apple of your choice)
- 3 tbsps unsweetened/natural peanut butter
- 1 tbsp rolled oats
- 1 tbsp dark chocolate chips

Directions:

Core and slice the apple into six rounds by cutting across it horizontally. Spread peanut butter on three of the slices, then sprinkle with oats and chocolate chips. Top with the remaining apple slices to make a “sandwich.” Get creative – try topping these tasty treats with shredded coconut, granola, cinnamon and more!

on topic with dr. kohn

Meet Delta Dental's Vice President of Dental Science and Policy, Bill Kohn, DDS. Formerly the director of the Division of Oral Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Kohn has timely tips and valuable insights to share as our resident dental expert.



Surveys show that as few as 8 percent of people who make New Year's resolutions actually keep them. Maybe a change of approach will work. Similar to Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman in the movie *The Bucket List*, put together a list of things that you must do before the year 2014 fades away. Fill your bucket list with things that will make you happy and healthy, provide some adventure, and fill your life with interest and growth. Make your list as long or short as you wish, but don't just keep this list in your mind – write it down. Keep your list in a visible place and motivate yourself to do at least one thing on your list each month. Near the top of the “stay healthy” part of the list should be to make an appointment with your dentist. Like most things we value and want to keep working properly, our teeth need regular maintenance. Dental check-ups and some preventive measures go a long way towards maintaining long-term, disease-free oral health. Best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous 2014.



PLAN YOUR DENTAL BUDGET

SAVE MONEY IN 2014

As another year begins, many people take a look at their finances and make a plan for the next 12 months. This year, keep your smile in mind by including dental insurance in your financial plan and allotting a budget for dental care.



Know Your Plan

Before your dentist begins any type of treatment, make sure you know what your dental benefits plan covers and what your out-of-pocket costs will be. Ask for a detailed description of your proposed treatment and research how much of the cost will be covered by your insurance. This is often called a predetermination or pre-estimate. By knowing what your plan covers, you will be able to make better-informed decisions about your treatment.



Get on a Schedule

Next, make and keep regular dental appointments. Doing so can help your dentist spot problems early, before they become more serious and more expensive.



The “In” Crowd

One of the easiest ways to save money is simply to visit an in-network dentist. In-network dentists have contracts with Delta Dental that prevent them from billing you for the difference between Delta Dental’s maximum allowed fee for services and the fee the dentists usually charge. Find an in-network dentist in your area by using our Find a Dentist tool on deltadental.com or in the Delta Dental mobile app. For tips on choosing your next dentist, go to page 14.

Start a Dialogue with Your Dentist



Discuss treatment options with your dentist after you know what your plan will cover – in some cases, you may be able to opt for a less expensive alternative. Remember that dental benefits are primarily designed to help prevent tooth decay and gum disease. That’s why procedures such as exams, X-rays, cleanings and fluoride treatments are usually covered with low coinsurance and no deductible. Sealants for children and routine periodontal treatments for adults are also usually covered.

Most important, take good care of your teeth! Simple preventive care, such as brushing teeth twice daily with fluoride toothpaste and flossing at least once daily, will help prevent bigger problems and bigger bills.

help your kids have *healthy smiles* in 2014

The new year isn’t just a clean slate for you – it can be a fresh start for your little one as well. This year, make a resolution you know you’ll keep: Take steps to ensure your child’s oral health is on the right track.



Use a clean, damp washcloth to wipe your child's gums after every feeding.

Sharing utensils or straws can transfer cavity-causing bacteria.

Schedule a dentist appointment within six months of your child's first tooth appearing.



Maintenance for Small Smiles

Many parents don't realize there's dental upkeep to be done from the moment a baby is born. Even before there are any teeth to brush, parents should use a clean, damp washcloth to wipe their child's gums after every feeding.

What you're feeding your baby is just as important as cleaning up after a feeding. Children should never be sent to bed with a bottle of milk or juice. Both beverages contain sugar – even milk has natural sugars – that can cause damage to teeth when left there for long periods of time, such as overnight or during naptimes.



Visit the Dentist by Age 1

If your child hasn't been to the dentist yet, make it happen in 2014. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends that a child should have his or her first dental appointment within six months of getting the first tooth – and no later than the first birthday. While that may seem a little on the early side, the first visit with a dentist accomplishes several very important things.

First, it helps familiarize your child with the dentist, the staff and the dental office environment. Starting dental visits early is a great way to help ensure your child will be at ease with dental appointments later in life. It's also important to set the example of making and keeping appointments every six months.

Establishing an early relationship with your child's dentist also helps you as a parent. Even though you've been brushing and flossing your entire life, trying to keep an infant or toddler's mouth clean requires a different set of skills. (Patience, for example.) Ask the dentist to give you a demonstration. Meeting the dentist also means you'll know whom to call in case of a dental emergency. And you could even save money by proactively taking care of your child's teeth instead of spending a chunk of change later for a serious problem that could have been prevented.

The first visit will likely include oral hygiene instructions, a discussion about fluoride, an assessment of your child's bite and a check for cavities and other mouth problems. Instill good habits in your children now, and you'll not only help them have a healthy 2014, but a lifetime of healthy smiles and good oral care.

Teach Your Child Not to Share

As soon as children are old enough to play, parents preach the importance of sharing. However, when it comes to utensils, straws or food, sharing is a big no-no. Though it can be tempting to offer your child a bite from your fork or a sip from your straw, sharing anything that goes in the mouth is also a good way to transfer cavity-causing bacteria.



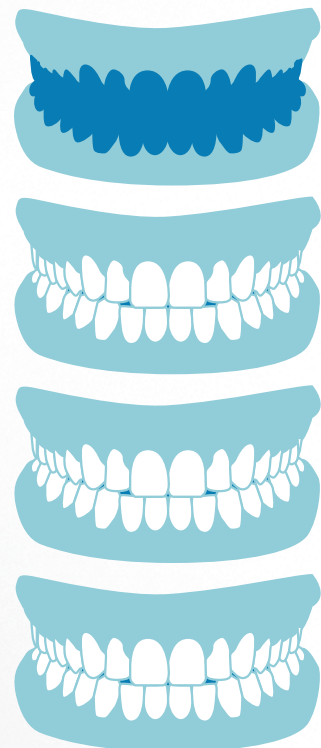
resolve NOT to become a statistic

Are you on the wrong side of the numbers? If so, resolve to make a comeback in 2014. It's never too late to commit to your smile!



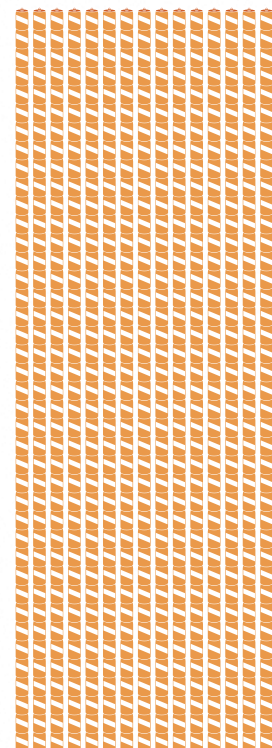
34%

The percentage of Americans who did *not* visit a dentist last year.



25%

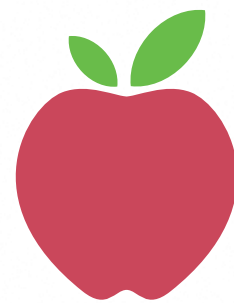
The percentage of people 65 and older who have lost all of their teeth.



600

The number of cans of soda consumed annually by the average American.

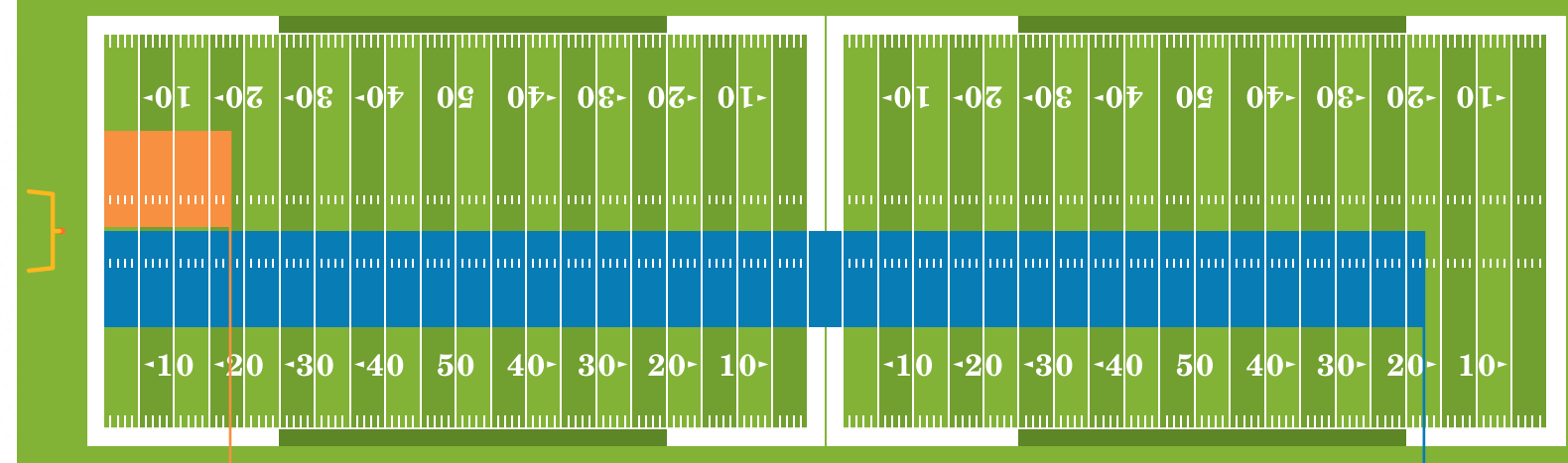
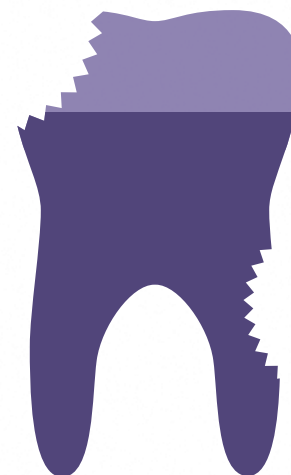
750,000



The number of school days U.S. children miss every year due to dental problems.

78%

The percentage of Americans who have at least one cavity by age 17.



18 yards

The amount of floss the average person purchases in a year.

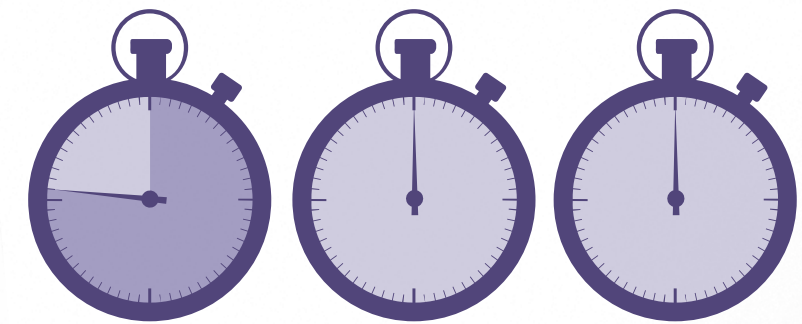
182.5 yards

The amount of floss a person should purchase each year.



46 seconds

The amount of time most people spend brushing.



2-3 minutes

The recommended amount of time people should brush. Download Delta Dental's mobile app to keep you on track.



Not all statistics are designed to make you frown, though. Here's one awesome factoid that gives you one more reason to keep your smile healthy:

According to the American Dental Association, a person's smile outranked eyes, hair and body as the most important physical feature.

5 things to look for in a dentist

Here's one New Year's resolution that's easy to follow: Schedule and keep your dental appointments. If you're looking for a new dentist, below are some tips to keep in mind.

- 1 Save money by staying in the Delta Dental network**
As we mentioned on page 8, visiting a Delta Dental network dentist is the easiest way to save some green. Use the Find a Dentist tool at deltadental.com or in the Delta Dental mobile app to find in-network dentists in your area.
- 2 References are good**
If you want to know whether a dentist is good at taking care of his or her patients, ask the patients! Check with friends and family members to see which dentists they recommend.
- 3 Ask the right questions**
Don't be afraid to ask some pre-appointment questions to make sure the dentist is the right fit for you. A few good ones to ask: What are the after-hour emergency policies? What services are performed in the office? What will I need a specialist for? How do you stay current with the latest dental practices?
- 4 Check out the office during your first appointment**
During your first appointment, take note of the office space. Is it clean and tidy? Is the staff friendly and accommodating? These are clear signs of a dental office that cares enough about patients to make them comfortable.
- 5 Get information about fees and payments first**
Make sure that you and your dentist are on the same page about when charges and payments will be made, what fees apply to you and how you can get the most value for your money.

A little research goes a long way. Gather all of the information you need before committing to a dentist, and consider having a backup in mind. If you're pleased with your dentist, you're more likely to make and keep appointments – which will make your mouth happier and healthier!

keeping you covered: don't pass up preventive care

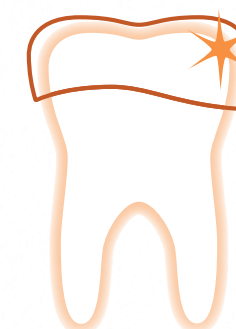
Preventive dental care – that is, taking care of your mouth *before* a problem pops up – is the best way to ensure good oral health. Delta Dental's Preventive Dental Care Study found that many people at high risk for tooth decay or periodontal disease aren't getting the preventive care they need.

To find out if you're at high risk for tooth decay or periodontal disease, visit mydentalscore.com for a free risk assessment.

For example:

fluoride

More than **70 percent of children ages 6-18 do not receive the recommended two fluoride treatments a year.**



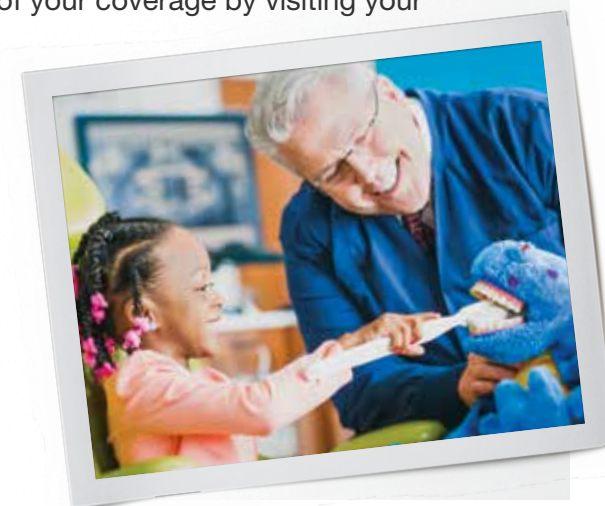
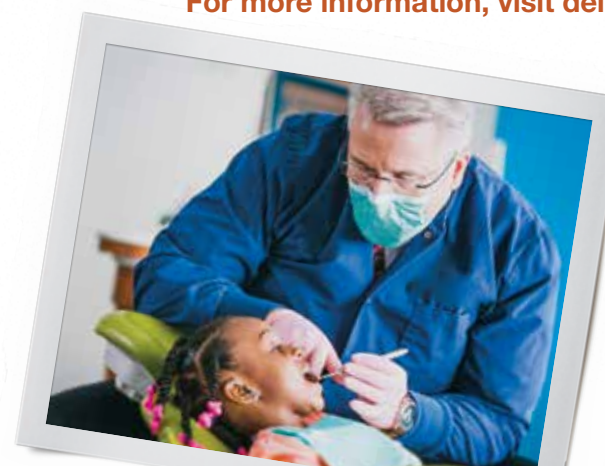
More than **60 percent of children ages 6-9 did not receive sealants** – protective coverings that help prevent cavities – **on their first molars.**

More than **80 percent of kids ages 11-15 lacked sealants on their second molars.**

And it's not just children who are missing out – nearly **two million of Delta Dental's adult enrollees are at high risk for gum disease**, yet half of them failed to get their teeth cleaned regularly as recommended.

Delta Dental's plans cover preventive care to help protect against the need for more costly and extensive dental work later on. Make sure you take advantage of your coverage by visiting your dentist for preventive check-ups every six months.

For more information, visit deltadental.com/pdcstudy.



brushing up



*Ever wonder what your dentist is really thinking? Grin! wanted to find out too, so we talked to Delta Dental network dentist **Dr. Jordan Cooper** of Cooper Family Dentistry and Central Arkansas Dental in Arkansas.*

What advice do you give your patients? Enjoy life. Live in the present! That being said, it is good practice to be proactive in order to have a healthy future. Take a multivitamin, exercise and eat healthy when you can, and floss your teeth! You will thank me later.

What's the best dental advice you've ever received? It is more life/business advice. "Good is the enemy of Great." If you settle for good, you will never be great. In dentistry, it pays to be a perfectionist, and that is what I offer my patients.

Do you prefer an electric toothbrush or a manual toothbrush? I use an electric toothbrush.

In your opinion, which celebrity has the best smile? Jessica Alba.

What dental problem do you see the most in your office? Gum disease. Gingivitis is really more common than people know. Routine cleanings and proper home care are extremely important to prevent that. We can often get that under control fairly quickly with proper compliance.

Do you have any cavities? My dad is my dentist, and at my last check-up, I got an "Atta-boy."

If you could tell patients to stop doing one thing, what would it be? Stop drinking so much soda and sugary drinks, like sweet tea. Not only are they terrible for your teeth, these drinks also contribute heavily to obesity and diabetes. Cutting them from your diet will better your oral health *and* overall health.

If you'd like to recommend your dentist for a Brushing Up interview, email grin@deltadental.com with his or her name and contact information.