

grin!

news, notes &
entertainment to
keep your smile
healthy & happy

spring/
summer

2014

volume 3, issue 1

how the farmers
market can help
your smile

5 summer sports
that require
mouthguards

tooth fairy
financials

results of the
2013 poll

how techie dental
developments
help you 24/7

grin!

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cavity-free calendar

April

April is **National Child Abuse Prevention Month**. Delta Dental is proud to support Prevent Abuse and Neglect through Dental Awareness (P.A.N.D.A.), a program that helps dentists recognize the signs of child abuse and educates them on proper reporting procedures.



May

It's **National Physical Fitness and Sports Month!** Check out page 11 to find out if a mouthguard is recommended for any of your favorite sports.

June

Here's a fun fact in honor of **National Smile Month**: People who smile tend to experience more career and personal success than those who don't.



July

Celebrate **National Ice Cream Month** with a sweet treat that's easy on your teeth. Check out our banana “ice cream” recipe on page 6!

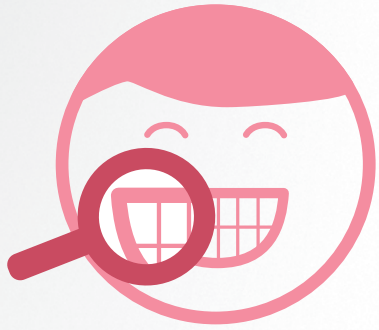


two-word answers

Q: At minimum, how often should you floss?

A: Once daily.





protect your health: schedule an oral exam today!

Oral cancer is the sixth most common cancer, accounting for 34,000 newly diagnosed cases each year – and 8,000 deaths.

The good news? The earlier oral cancer is detected and treated, the better the survival rate – which is just one of the many reasons you should take advantage of the annual oral exam your dental insurance typically covers. Regular dental checkups are typically covered with no or a low deductible under most Delta Dental plans.

As part of the exam, your dentist will check for oral cancer indicators, including feeling for lumps or irregular tissues in your mouth, head and neck. A biopsy will be recommended if anything seems concerning or out of the ordinary.

You should also perform your own self-examinations to look for early warning signs, including unexplained bleeding or numbness, lumps, sores that don't heal within two weeks, rough spots, hoarseness, difficulty swallowing, and red or white patches or other soft tissue changes. If you notice any of these symptoms, contact your dentist immediately.

Heavy drinkers and people who smoke or use other tobacco products are at higher risk for oral cancer. Though it is most common in people over age 50, new research indicates that younger people may be developing oral cancers related to human papillomavirus (HPV). Schedule your oral cancer screening today!

readers ask, we answer

Courtney writes:

“I get more than my fair share of canker sores. Is there any way to prevent them? Why do I get them in the first place?”

Hi, Courtney. We can sympathize. Irritating at best and downright painful at their worst, these small mouth ulcers most commonly form on the inner cheeks or lips, floor of the mouth, or the tongue. They can make it difficult to eat, brush, and sometimes even talk.

Unfortunately, canker sores are still a bit of a mystery. Doctors don't know what causes them, though suspects include stress; fatigue; an impaired immune system; and deficiencies in iron, folic acid, or vitamin B12. Small injuries to the mouth also seem to contribute.

These little nuisances should go away on their own in about a week. (Consult your physician if sores persist for longer than 10 days.) There are, however, ways to ease the pain. Various over-the-counter medications can be purchased at most drugstores, or you can try a homemade remedy: Mix one part hydrogen peroxide to one part water and apply it to the sore with a cotton swab. Whichever option you choose, avoid hot, spicy, or acidic foods that might irritate the sores while they heal.

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: for the record

3.86 inches

The **world's longest tongue**, which belongs to Stephen Taylor from the U.K.

140 pounds

The **greatest weight balanced on teeth**. Though Frank Simon of the U.S. achieved this feat in 2007, we don't recommend trying this one at home!



6.69 inches

The **world's widest mouth**, found on Francisco Domingo Joaquim of Angola.

1,470

The **greatest number of people flossing** on one long, single strand of dental floss. The feat was achieved by students, parents, and teachers from North Carolina in 2004.



177,003

The **largest group of people simultaneously brushing** their teeth, which occurred in India in 2007.



2,037

The **world's largest collection of toothpaste tubes**, owned by Val Kolpakov in Georgia.

mouth-friendly recipe: banana “ice cream”

This recipe provides the cool, creamy sweetness of ice cream – without any added sugar.

Ingredients:

2-3 ripe bananas
(yep, that’s it!)

Directions:

Peel bananas and cut them into small slices. Freeze them for 1-2 hours, then place them in a blender and blend until creamy. Scoop and serve! Once you’ve tried the “original” flavor, experiment with healthy add-ins such as peanut butter, strawberries, and dark chocolate. (Be aware that some add-ins contain sugar, and remember to brush after eating.)



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.



As with many product types, finding the right brushing, flossing, rinsing, or whitening product for your personal oral care needs might take some trial and error. Water flossers, air flossers, LED-assisted whitening, a myriad of electric toothbrushes – with so many devices to choose from, it can be hard for consumers to determine whether any of these technologies will work for them. No matter what you choose, keep in mind that the main goal is to remove the plaque that forms on, around, and between your teeth every day. While tried-and-true manual brushing and flossing does an effective job for many, some people may benefit from electric or battery-powered technology.

Remember that no technology is a substitute for regular dental appointments. Your dentist and dental hygienist can help you evaluate how effective your habits are and make suggestions for alternative devices if necessary (or if you just like to try new things).

HOW TECHIE DENTAL DEVELOPMENTS HELP YOU 24/7

It’s easy to fall out of a good oral health routine when you’re on the road for vacation. Luckily, there are plenty of portable dental technology tools to help keep your oral health on track this summer – and all year round. From the time you wake up to before you hit the hay, your teeth and technology can make a great team.

MORNING

Whether you’re an electric toothbrush enthusiast or love your manual one, technology can help you get the most out of your a.m. routine – even when you’re on the go.

Electric toothbrush users already know that this technology can help keep teeth healthy, especially for people who have trouble reaching all the corners of the mouth because of dexterity issues such as arthritis or physical disabilities. Although manual toothbrushes can be just as effective as electric toothbrushes if used properly, people don’t always brush as long or as well as they should with a manual toothbrush.

Regardless of what type of toothbrush you use, make sure you’re getting the most out of it with a toothbrush timer. While brushing for two minutes is recommended, most people brush for just 46 seconds. If you’re guilty of cutting your brushing time short, a toothbrush timer can help you hit the 120-second mark. Try the timer on our free Delta Dental Mobile app, available for both iOS (Apple) and Android devices.



AFTERNOON

Getting enough of the right nutrients is essential to good oral health, no matter where you are. Whether you're sitting down to lunch or contemplating an afternoon snack, you can use a free mobile app to keep a food journal, or research the nutrients in your food to make sure you're meeting daily requirements. Calcium provides the skeletal structure for bones and teeth, so it's essential for good oral health. Men



and women ages 19 to 50 need 1,000 mg of calcium a day, for instance. A quick check on a nutrition app can tell you what percentage of your daily needs are being met by the yogurt you're snacking on. Other nutrients that can help keep your smile sparkling include vitamin D, which assists your body with calcium absorption; and protein, which produces the connective gum tissue that supports the teeth. MyFitnessPal has an app called Calorie Counter for both Apple and Android devices. In addition to counting calories, the app provides nutrition information, serving sizes, and more.



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EVENING

Want a whiter smile? Post-dinner is a good time to get your sparkle on if you are using one of the many at-home tooth-whitening products. (Be sure to discuss any over-the-counter whitening products with your dentist before taking them for a spin.)

When you're done with your whitening treatment, remember to floss. There are floss options available to suit every need, from floss picks to the traditional spool of mint-flavored string. If you're looking for a technological assist, try a device that uses a light blast of air and water (or mouthwash) to wash away plaque.

Whether you're well versed in the latest and greatest gadgets or simply want a better way to brush, there's a dental technology that can help keep your smile healthy when you're on vacation this summer – or any time of the year!



how the farmers market can help your



Fruits and veggies play a huge part in good oral health by providing essential nutrients that help keep teeth and gums healthy. Spring and summer are the perfect seasons to work some delicious fresh produce into your diet. Here are some of our favorite tooth-friendly foods to look for the next time you stop by your local grocer or farmers market.

WHAT'S IN SEASON:

April and May: Broccoli, limes, spinach, and strawberries

June, July, and August: Cantaloupe, cucumbers, honeydew, peppers, strawberries, and watermelon



Broccoli can add a dose of calcium to your diet. If you're lactose intolerant – or simply don't like milk, cheese, yogurt, or other calcium-rich dairy products – dark green leafy veggies, such as broccoli, are good alternative sources.



Cantaloupe, honeydew, and watermelon are all great examples of melons that have high water content and can help you stay hydrated. Good hydration leads to good saliva production. Saliva can neutralize acids in the mouth and help prevent cavities by washing food particles and debris from your teeth.



Cucumbers, like melons, contain lots of water. They're perfect sliced up in salads. Combine with spinach and strawberries for the ultimate smile-boosting seasonal meal.



Limes, like all citrus fruits, provide a healthy dose of vitamin C. We're not recommending that you go out and eat some whole limes, but consider adding lime juice to guacamole, salsa, and Thai food.



Peppers of all kinds are some of the richest sources of vitamin C, a nutrient that helps your bones and teeth heal and fight off infections. If jalapeños aren't your thing, don't worry – a sweet, green bell pepper provides the same nutrients, minus the heat.



Spinach is a great source of folic acid, which helps strengthen gums and the supporting soft tissues in your mouth.



Strawberries are not only full of vitamin C, potassium, and folate, but they're also natural tooth whiteners. That's because these juicy red berries contain malic acid, a natural astringent that helps erase enamel stains and discoloration.



5 SUMMER SPORTS that require mouthguards

Although high-contact sports, such as football and basketball, typically come to mind when we think of mouthguards, pearly whites need protection during warm-weather sports as well.

Here are five mouthguard-worthy activities that may not be on your radar:



BICYCLING

A mouthguard is a must, whether you're an aspiring BMX racer who hits the trails hard and fast, or a mountain biker going for a long trail ride. Even the most careful rider can hit an unexpected rock in the road. If that happens, you want to make sure your teeth are as crash-proof as possible.



SKATEBOARDING

The same logic applies to skateboarding: Even if your child is extremely skilled, there's always a chance that something could stop the skateboard wheels from spinning when it's least expected. Make sure your kids wear mouthguards when they hit the skate park with friends – and even when they're just messing around in the driveway.



SAND VOLLEYBALL

Typically, you want to spike the ball, not let the ball spike you. But volleyball can be an unpredictable sport, which is why wearing a mouthguard will come in handy – for you *and* your smile.



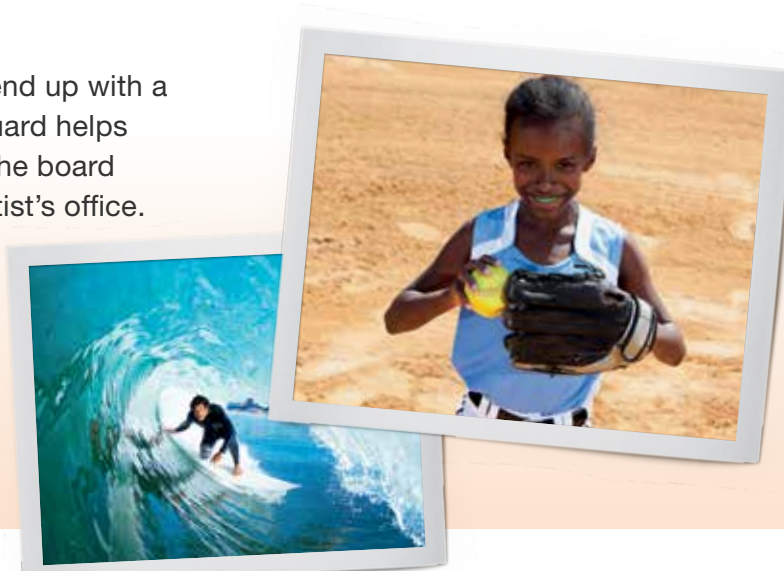
BASEBALL/SOFTBALL

Though baseball is less of a contact sport than others, there's still opportunity for a mouthful of harm. From getting hit by a stray ball to face-first slides into home plate, there are plenty of reasons to wear a mouthguard on the diamond.



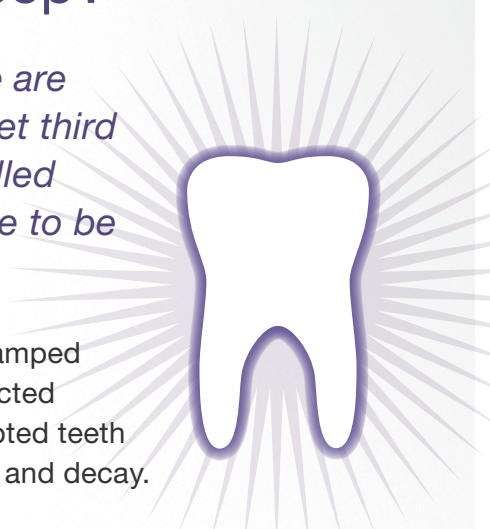
SURFING

One rogue wave and you could end up with a face-full of surfboard. A mouthguard helps ensure that you get back up on the board instead of hanging 10 at the dentist's office.



wisdom teeth: to keep or not to keep?

From age 17 to 25, right around the time many people are heading off to college to get “wiser,” it's common to get third molars removed. Now you know the reason they're called “wisdom teeth” – but do you know why they often have to be taken out?



Though they don't always cause problems, third molars are often cramped inside the mouth, sometimes to the point they can't fully erupt. Impacted wisdom teeth can become problematic beneath the gums. Even erupted teeth may be difficult to properly reach with a toothbrush, causing cavities and decay.

An estimated **75-80%** of people end up needing wisdom tooth removal surgery due to pain, tooth decay, or gum disease.

In the past, dentists have recommended this elective surgery even before it's needed, hoping to prevent future problems. Some studies have found that people who retain their wisdom teeth often have more oral health problems later in life than those who have had their third molars removed. Other studies, however, have found that the risks of anesthesia and surgery are too great to have wisdom teeth removed if there's not really a need.

If you decide to have one or more of your or your child's third molars removed, check your dental and health insurance plans to understand what kind of coverage you have. Delta Dental's payment for treatment varies depending on your plan and the dentist you choose. Because the dentist or oral surgeon may recommend intravenous sedation or general anesthesia to help make you comfortable, check to see if your medical or dental plan covers this portion of the procedure as well. Asking your dentist for a free pre-treatment estimate can help you prepare for any associated costs.



The bottom line: Before having wisdom teeth removed, have a discussion with your dentist to make sure you're making an informed decision. If you get your wisdom teeth removed, don't forget to check with your dental and medical benefits representatives so you know what kind of coverage applies to your procedure.



Tooth Fairy FINANCIALS:

RESULTS OF THE 2013 POLL

Every year, Delta Dental asks parents and caregivers to answer a very important question: "How much money did the Tooth Fairy leave if she visited your house this year?"

In 2013, more than 1,000 caregivers responded to the survey and told us that the Tooth Fairy was more generous than ever before.

\$3.50

THE AVERAGE AMOUNT children received UNDER THEIR PILLOWS IN 2013, UP 45% FROM 2012.



The Tooth Fairy LEFT AN AVERAGE OF **\$4.51** for the **1ST LOST BABY TOOTH.**



6 IN 10 caregivers say it's **MOM** WHO ASSISTS THE TOOTH FAIRY, WHILE 35% SAY DAD HELPS.

 **54%** OF CHILDREN WAITED FOR THE *first tooth* TO FALL OUT ON ITS OWN.

 **22%** of excited kids PULLED OUT THE TOOTH THEMSELVES.

16% ASKED A PARENT to help pull a tooth. 

 **15%** OF PARENTS SAY THEIR CHILD lost a tooth at **SCHOOL,** WHILE **13%** SAY THE TOOTH WAS LOST while eating.

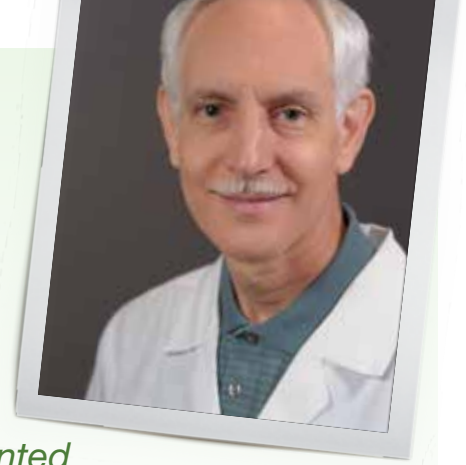
The Tooth Fairy is a great way to teach children about good oral health habits.

- Introduce the Tooth Fairy early on and let your kids know that healthy habits make her happy.
- Leave a note from the Tooth Fairy praising your child's habits and reminding him or her to brush twice daily and floss once a day.
- Have the Tooth Fairy leave a toothbrush and floss to encourage good oral health habits.

To learn more about the Tooth Fairy and take the poll, visit TheOriginalToothFairyPoll.com



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. Mark Waltzer** of Waltzer Dental in New Jersey.*

What advice do you give your patients?

We can only help you maintain your oral health if you pay attention to our recommendations and come in regularly for maintenance.

What's the best dental advice you've ever received?

Don't forget that there's a person attached to that tooth you're working on!

Do you brush and floss as much as you recommend?

Yes, we practice what we preach.

What's your favorite dental joke?

Q: What did the hygienist call the x-ray?

A: A tooth pic!

Do you have any cavities?

I had a mouthful as a kid – we used to drink a lot of soda. Now I have them under control, but restorations wear out eventually.

If you could tell patients to stop doing one thing, what would it be?

Smoking!

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.

keeping you covered: the benefits of using an in-network dentist

Choosing a Delta Dental in-network dentist doesn't just save you money – it also helps ensure that you receive the best care available.

At Delta Dental, we require our network dentists to meet professionally recognized standards for quality, making sure they are properly licensed and follow accepted best practices for cleanliness and safety. And because we establish consistent and fair fees, you'll know you're receiving quality care while saving on out-of-pocket costs.

More than four out of five dentists nationwide participate in the Delta Dental Premier® network – the largest dentist network in the nation. That makes finding an in-network dentist easy. Visit deltadental.com or use the Delta Dental mobile app to find a participating dentist in your area, or to check whether your current dentist is in-network.