

grin!

TAKE THE FRIGHT out of Halloween

THE BENEFITS OF
mobile dental clinics

MAINTAINING
ORAL HEALTH
as you age

Wild (and sometimes risky)
WORLD RECORDS

fall 2023

in this issue of grin!



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grin! more

Visit the *Grin!* website for more ways to keep your smile healthy.
View web-exclusive content, videos, and more!



FUN + INSPIRATION Benefits of smiling

As simple as it sounds, a smile can make a big difference — to you and to others. Discover the value of a friendly grin.



WELLNESS + NUTRITION Dental X-rays 101

Dental X-rays can seem a little mysterious. How do they work? What do dentists use them for? And most importantly, how safe are they? Examine X-rays in this overview.



Looking for reasons to smile?

Access the digital version anytime at grinmag.com or by scanning the QR code.



ON TOPIC WITH DR. DILL

Disparities in access to oral health

Joseph Dill, DDS, is Delta Dental's Chief Dental Officer. With more than 35 years of experience in the dental field, including 10 in private and public health practice and 20 in dental insurance, Dr. Dill provides expert insights and helpful advice to keep you smiling bright.

The conditions into which you are born, grow up, and live can influence your ability to care for your teeth and gums. Let's look at a few groups who are in need of better access to oral health services, then discuss what efforts there are to reduce existing disparities.

Who needs better access to care?



Low-income Americans are 2 to 3 times more likely to have untreated cavities.¹ There are many reasons for this, from being unable to afford a dental plan and care expenses to living in a community without adequate access to oral health care or fluoridated water.



Children and adults among some groups are more likely to have untreated tooth decay.² It is more common among non-Hispanic Blacks and Mexican Americans in any age group, typically because of issues with access or financial factors.



60% of adults 65 or older have some form of gum disease.³ Challenges with transportation, lack of dental coverage, or a physical impairment can prevent older adults from visiting the dentist to get the care they need.

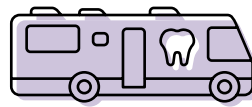


4 in 10 Americans do not currently have dental coverage.⁴ Uninsured or low-income adults are two times as likely to have at least one to three untreated cavities, and three times as likely to have four or more untreated cavities.⁵

What programs help reduce oral health disparities?



School sealant programs
These programs send dental professionals to schools to provide free sealants for children. Sealants are thin, plastic coatings painted on teeth that greatly reduce cavity risk.



Mobile dental clinics
These traveling vehicles take dental professionals to their patients, instead of the other way around. See the article on page 17 for more information.



Community water fluoridation
This helps reduce cavities, tooth loss, and tooth decay. Speak with your dentist if you don't have access to fluoridated water.

The end goal is equal access for all

Removing barriers to care is critical to reducing preventable dental problems. To help expand access to care, Delta Dental supported dental treatment and prevention programs for underserved communities that reached over 20 million people in 2022.

^{1,2,3,5}Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
⁴Delta Dental 2023 State of America's Oral Health and Wellness Report

MOUTH-FRIENDLY RECIPE

Leftover turkey stuffed peppers

Give thanks for leftovers! These easy-to-throw-together stuffed peppers make the most of your leftover turkey by creating a whole new meal that's delicious and nutritious. Bell peppers act as a cornucopia overflowing with ingredients that your oral and overall health will be grateful for.

Ingredients:

- 5 large bell peppers
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups mushrooms, finely chopped
- 1 cup onion, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon garlic, minced
- 1 cup brown rice, cooked
- 3 cups cooked turkey breast, cubed
- ½ cup tomato sauce
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1½ cups shredded cheddar cheese
- Salt, to taste
- 1 teaspoon fresh parsley, finely chopped, for garnish

Directions:

- 1 Prep the peppers:** Preheat the oven to 375 F. Cut the tops off the peppers, then remove and discard the seeds. Place the peppers on a baking pan; lightly season the peppers with salt and pepper. Roast for 15 minutes or until softened.
- 2 Make the filling:** Heat oil in a shallow saucepan for 2 minutes over medium-high heat until sizzling hot. Add the mushrooms and sauté until golden brown, about 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in the onion and garlic; sauté until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add the brown rice and turkey; stir well to combine. Cook an additional 2 minutes. Stir in the tomato sauce, soy sauce, and Italian seasoning. Add ½ cup cheddar cheese and stir well to mix evenly. Remove from heat and season with salt to taste.
- 3 Assemble and bake the stuffed peppers:** Stuff each roasted bell pepper with the filling and sprinkle cheddar cheese on top. Bake for 25 minutes or until the melted cheese turns golden brown. Let rest for 5 minutes. Garnish with fresh parsley and serve. Enjoy!



HEALTHY HIGHLIGHTS

- Turkey**
is a lean protein that's full of teeth-strengthening phosphorus.
- Bell peppers**
are rich in vitamin C that can help protect against gum diseases.
- Cheddar cheese**
contains calcium, which can make your tooth enamel strong.

Finding ways to give back

Autumn is the time of year that sparks feelings of gratitude and giving. What better way to embrace the season than to find ways to give back to people or places that have inspired your life?

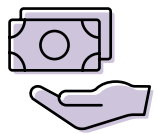


How to start

It can be as simple as getting in touch — either in person or online — with any organization you like and asking about opportunities or needs. There are plenty of ways to give back to your community, just choose what works best for you and get started.

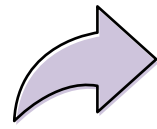
What to do

Giving back creates a warm and supportive community where everyone feels valued and cared for. Here are some ideas to explore.



Donate

Offer up your time, unique skillset, money, or extra items like clothing and oral care supplies.



Share

Create happiness by taking your pet to a local nursing home or spreading good news to make people smile.



Act

Perform a simple random act of kindness, or take big action by organizing a local charity event or fundraiser.



Help

Look for opportunities to lend a hand like tutoring a child, raking a disabled friend's leaves, or taking an older neighbor to the dentist.



Support

Shop at local businesses, attend your farmers market, plant trees in community areas, or even pick up litter around your neighborhood.



Write

Put pen to paper and send letters of encouragement to soldiers, college kids, first responders, and nursing home residents.

Benefits

The rewards of giving back are bountiful. It allows us to grow individually and adjust our point of view, and it's proven to lower stress and improve our physical and mental health. Ever notice how doing something for someone else brings a smile to both the receiver *and* the giver?

Here's what giving back can do for you:

- Gives a sense of meaning and purpose
- Boosts self-confidence, self-esteem, and overall satisfaction with life
- Makes you and others smile
- Reduces stress-related issues, including jaw clenching and teeth grinding
- Builds relationships
- Improves overall mood
- Keeps you active and engaged

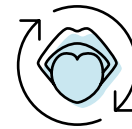
Readers ask, we answer

Austin asks:
"Should I clean my tongue?"

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

Everyone knows they should brush their teeth, but there isn't a common opinion on cleaning your tongue. Should it be a part of your daily oral health routine? Let's take a closer look at all there is to know.

What are the benefits of cleaning your tongue?



Refreshed sense of taste

A clean tongue will help improve the taste of your favorite foods!



Fresher breath

Removing potential odor-causing bacteria from your tongue can reduce bad breath.



Better oral health

A clean mouth reduces your likelihood of cavities and gum disease.

What tools should you use?

Both a toothbrush and a tongue scraper can get the job done, but a tongue scraper more effectively removes the bacteria from the bumps on your tongue.

Tongue scrapers are easy to come by — you can find them at most stores that sell toothpaste and floss. The scraper should not be sharp or made of metal. Instead, pick a softer plastic option with no sharp edges.

If you don't have a tongue scraper, simply use your toothbrush. You'll still see more benefits to your oral health than if you don't clean your tongue at all.

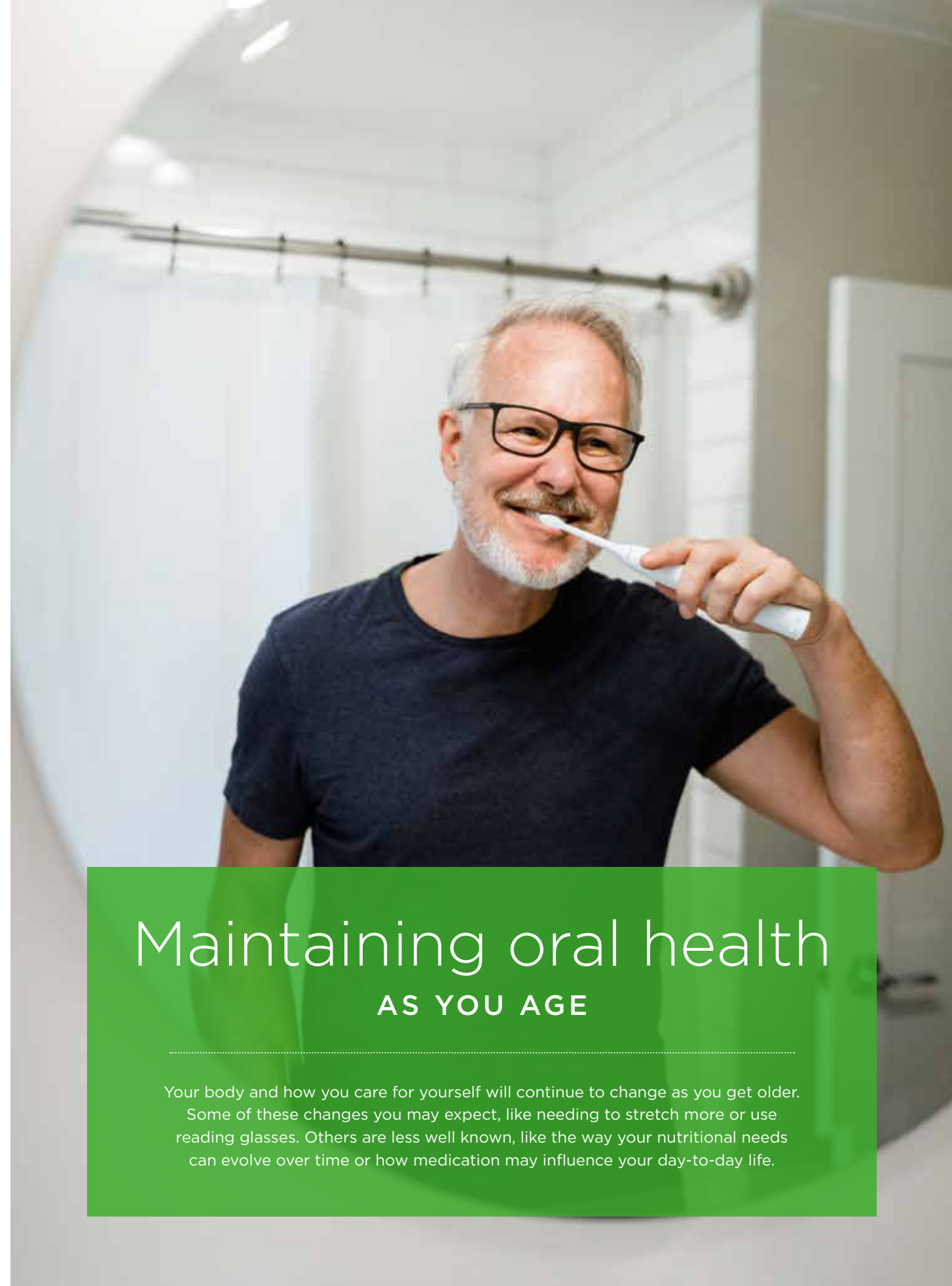
What is the best technique for tongue cleaning?

It's very easy to add tongue scraping to your daily routine. Just follow these simple steps after you brush your teeth:

- Stick out your tongue.
- Start at the back of the tongue and scrape or brush toward the front using light pressure.
- Rinse off your tongue scraper or toothbrush.
- Scrape or brush a second time.
- Rinse your tongue scraper or toothbrush again.

If you experience pain, try to use less pressure or consult your dentist.

Cleaning your tongue as part of your oral health routine can help you enjoy the benefits of fresher breath, reduced bacteria, and improved taste. Give it a try, and if you like the way it makes your mouth feel, keep it up!



Maintaining oral health AS YOU AGE

Your body and how you care for yourself will continue to change as you get older. Some of these changes you may expect, like needing to stretch more or use reading glasses. Others are less well known, like the way your nutritional needs can evolve over time or how medication may influence your day-to-day life.

No two people are the same, but many of us do share common experiences as we get older.



Fewer calories, more nutrients
Calorie needs vary from person to person based on factors like size, activity level, and other health needs. You will also need fewer calories as you age because you'll have less muscle mass and a reduced metabolism. But the foods you do eat should be nutrient rich.

Weakened teeth and gums
As you age, your gums may recede, tooth enamel can wear down, and you are more likely to experience dry mouth. All of these changes can make you more vulnerable to bacteria, cavities, gum disease, and other oral health issues.

Side effects from medication
Older adults are more likely to take one or more prescription medications. No matter what they're for, it's important to watch out for side effects — such as dry mouth, which can cause a buildup of mouth bacteria and oral health issues.

Keep your smile healthy by brushing twice daily, flossing once, and visiting the dentist regularly. Eating a nutrient-rich and low-sugar diet will also help.



Aging and nutritional needs



Protein helps combat age-related muscle loss. In addition to lean meat, eggs, and dairy products, like cottage cheese and low-fat milk, protein can be found in beans, peas, and lentils.

Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium, which keeps your bones and tooth enamel strong. It can be found in egg yolks, salmon, and tuna.

Fiber helps aid digestion, which slows down alongside your metabolism as you age. It can also help with issues like high cholesterol and high blood sugar.

Vitamin B12 supports your red blood cell count and is associated with a lower risk of gum disease. It's found in beef, tuna, dairy, and eggs.

If you're concerned about not consuming enough of the right vitamins and minerals, speak with your physician about your diet and daily nutrition.



Continued from page 9



Reducing side effects of medication

Older adults take more medications, which means they are more likely to experience adverse reactions to prescription medication. This may influence diet, appetite, and oral health. Medication side effects can include dry mouth — which contributes to bad breath and tooth decay — or feeling disoriented, which could cause you to miss a meal or forget to brush your teeth.

How to avoid complications



Listen to the experts

Always take medication as prescribed by your dentist, physician, or any other medical professional you see. Reach out to them if you experience any persistent side effects.

Keep a list

Mixing otherwise safe medications can create unexpected issues. Keep a list of all the medications you take, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and supplements. Any health expert you see can use this list to help you avoid mixing medicines that don't interact well.

Communicate any issues

Write down any complications you have, such as persistent dry mouth, so you can discuss them with your dentist or physician later.

Eat right, feel right, and age healthier

We all face changes to our oral health and overall well-being as we get older, but a little extra care with your diet and medication can help you take control, combat those issues, and make the most of your golden years.

The gift of gratitude

Expressing gratitude is good for other people and for you. Research has even linked it to health benefits like decreased depression and anxiety, improved mood, and better sleep. Feeling more rested can, in turn, reduce mouth problems like teeth grinding and help keep your smile healthy. So why not take a moment and give a little thanks to your friends, family, or community?



Gratitude activity

Use the space provided to brainstorm your own list of people, places, and things (like a healthy smile!) to be grateful for and how you plan to show your appreciation.

I'm grateful for _____ because _____.
I will express that gratitude by _____.
I'm grateful for _____ because _____.
I will express that gratitude by _____.
I'm grateful for _____ because _____.
I will express that gratitude by _____.
I'm grateful for _____ because _____.
I will express that gratitude by _____.
I'm grateful for _____ because _____.
I will express that gratitude by _____.

Gratitude thought starters

If you're unsure how to show appreciation to those around you, here are a few suggestions to get you started.



For friends and family

Handwrite a personal letter, choose (or create) a thoughtful gift, or cook a favorite meal or treat.



For your community

Donate supplies to schools or shelters, volunteer at local events, or write notes of appreciation to essential workers (firefighters, teachers, etc.).



In your everyday life

Express gratitude in the moment, like thanking your dentist and hygienist at the end of your next checkup.



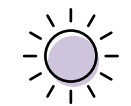
TAKE THE FRIGHT out of Halloween

Halloween is a memorable time of year. When else can you see ghosts, dinosaurs, and pirates smiling and laughing together? But the day can create a few health risks if you're not careful. Here's how you can say "boo" to danger while you enjoy the festivities.

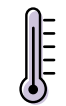


Stay comfortable in your costume

The right costume is a big part of the Halloween fun. With a little imagination, there's no limit to what you can be! Whether you're making a spooky masterpiece at home or buying a costume at the store, you should consider a few safety tips.



Pick a costume with bright, reflective material, or add reflective tape to darker fabric.



Make sure you'll be warm enough if chilly weather is in the forecast.



Think about accessories. Don't trip over a long cape or wear a mask with poor visibility.



Use nontoxic makeup and face paint so you don't irritate your skin.



Avoid colored contact lenses, unless prescribed by your optometrist.



Be careful with plastic fangs and other mouthpieces, which may cut your gums or damage your tooth enamel.



Take care of your trick-or-treater

Accompany your child while they trick or treat and make sure you bring a phone for emergencies. It's also wise to plan your path in advance. Look for well-lit streets with sidewalks, if possible, and avoid busy roads and alleyways.

If it's your child's first Halloween, discuss trick-or-treating with them so they know what to expect. Let them know the basics, like going to houses with lights on, saying "trick or treat," and only taking one piece of candy per house. If your kid has food allergies, tell them to hunt for homes with teal pumpkins on display. This newer trend indicates a house is handing out nonfood items, so everyone can enjoy the Halloween fun!



If you're handing out treats at home, remember to keep your porch light on, clear leaves and other debris from your path and steps, and secure your pets.

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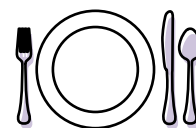


Satisfy your sweet tooth (in moderation)

Candy and sweet treats go hand in hand with Halloween, but there's no need to give your oral health a scare. Here are a few ways to enjoy the holiday without harming your teeth and gums.



Save treats for when you get home. It's easy to eat too much sugar while you're walking and talking!



Eat candy with a meal, when your body produces a lot of saliva, to help wash away sugar. Limit snacking between meals to avoid frequent exposure to sugar.



Drink plenty of water. Don't let food haunt your teeth. Wash it down while you eat to help reduce mouth bacteria, which lowers your risk for cavities and tooth decay.



Don't forget to brush and floss. Maintain your daily oral health routine after you enjoy the festivities. And remember not to eat any candy after you brush!



Have a monster candy haul? If you'd like to unload some candy, find a candy buy-back or donation program near you.



Give your pumpkin a giant grin

Pumpkin carving is a great way to celebrate the holiday and express your creativity. Just follow a few safety tips to make sure you and your orange friend are smiling on Halloween.

- Use artificial lights instead of real candles in pumpkins. You get the same spooky look without the fire hazard.
- Consider where you place your pumpkin — Halloween night may be dark, so don't put it on steps or on a path where someone might trip.



Have a happy and healthy Halloween

From the spooky fun to the carved pumpkins, there's nothing quite like Halloween. Just make sure you keep your smile safe and create scary-good memories!

Your FALL smile list



- 1 Open a window and enjoy the crisp breeze.
- 2 Put on some flannel and take a nature walk.
- 3 Take time to notice the world changing from greens to golds.
- 4 Add a large pot of mums to your porch for bright autumn color!
- 5 Create a whole new meal using leftovers. See our recipe on page 5.
- 6 Rake your older neighbor's leaves so they can take a break.
- 7 Volunteer to serve a warm, filling meal at a local shelter.
- 8 Find ways to practice gratitude and watch the benefits unfold.
- 9 Keep Halloween spooky with a healthy twist. Check out our ideas on pages 12-14.
- 10 Light a pumpkin-scented candle.



////////// DENTAL TREND SPOTLIGHT //////////
Dry scooping preworkout powder

New fitness trends pop up often, and it's easy to see why. Who doesn't want a lifehack for better health? But not all trends are based in truth. Let's examine one recent social media fad — dry scooping preworkout powder.

What is preworkout powder?

Preworkout powder is a fitness supplement intended to provide an energy boost before a workout. There are a wide range of ingredients, but most powders are packed with caffeine, sugar, vitamins, nutrients, and amino acids like creatine, which helps build muscle mass.

What does "dry scooping" mean?

Dry scooping simply means swallowing a scoop of preworkout powder and quickly drinking something to wash it down. This is not the intended way to consume it — the powder is meant to be dissolved in a liquid (most often water).



Why do people try this trend?

People who dry scoop are hoping to supercharge the benefits of the preworkout powder by having the energy boost kick in all at once. But in this case, they are actually creating new health risks.



What are the dangers to dry scooping?

The powder should be dissolved in liquid so your body can absorb it over time, instead of all at once. Risks of dry scooping include:

- Stomachache or digestive issues like diarrhea
- Increased blood pressure and heart rate
- Heart palpitations or, in extreme cases, a heart attack
- Respiratory or choking risks from inhaling the powder
- Sugar and other ingredients may feed oral bacteria, which can cause cavities and other oral health problems



Are there any benefits to this trend?

There are no benefits to dry scooping. Preworkout powder, when consumed as intended, may help some people feel more energy during exercise and recover faster afterward. But the trend of dry scooping does not provide an extra boost.

Dry scooping preworkout powder floods your body with caffeine — equivalent to three cups of coffee at once!



Our verdict: Dry scooping should be avoided because it can pose a wide variety of health risks, from oral health problems like tooth decay to life-threatening issues like choking and heart attack.

¹Cleveland Clinic

The benefits of mobile dental clinics

Regular dental appointments are important for maintaining oral health. But this can be difficult for individuals and families who don't have great access to care or aren't able to travel to a dentist's office.



Mobile dentistry units are traveling care vehicles that help bring dentists and staff to their patients, instead of the other way around. They set up shop at workplaces, schools, communities without dental offices, and other areas where care may be less accessible.

Oral health care on wheels

Mobile clinics are a valuable and effective tool for supporting the oral health of children, older adults, and underserved communities, including people in rural or low-income areas without dedicated local clinics.

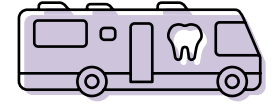
There are two different types of mobile dental clinics:

- A large vehicle, similar to a mobile home, that has been customized into a dental care unit. This type of mobile clinic can visit multiple locations in one day.
- A dental care unit that is transported from location to location on the back of a large truck. This type of clinic typically stays in one location for a week or two at a time.

Either way, these traveling clinics create access to oral health care for populations that might not otherwise have it.

Finding a mobile dental clinic in your area

If you have dental coverage, your plan will cover you the same as if you were visiting a regular dental office. For those without coverage, try reaching out to your state's health department. They may be able to help locate a government- or charity-funded mobile clinic near you.



The number of mobile clinics has increased in recent years, in part because pandemic safe-distancing guidelines made it more difficult to provide dental services inside schools and workplaces.

A wide range of dental services are provided

The exact services offered will vary from clinic to clinic, but mobile care units are capable of providing a wide array of services and treatments. A mobile clinic may offer:

- Cleanings
- Sealants
- Fluoride treatments
- Fillings
- Extractions
- Root canals
- Crowns
- Bridges
- Dentures
- X-rays



Wild (and sometimes risky) WORLD RECORDS

Looking at world records is always fascinating. There are more records than you may imagine, with feats that make you wonder, “how did someone do that?” and others that make you think, “why would anyone want to do that?” But some of the records, especially the wackier ones, can create unintended health risks. With that in mind, let’s examine a few current world records related to oral health.

WORLD RECORD
1

Heaviest ship pulled by teeth: 614 tons

Set on October 30, 2018, in Chornomorsk, Ukraine, by Oleg Skavysh
Oleg “Tug-Tooth” Skavysh is a strongman and pediatrician — quite the combination! He set this record to raise awareness for children suffering from cancer.

Should I try this at home? Please don’t. Holding and moving nonfood items with your mouth can cause damage to your teeth and gums, even items as small as a sewing pin. You can chip or crack your tooth enamel, loosen your teeth, scrape or cut your gums, or cause other damage that will require a visit to the dentist.



WORLD RECORD
2

Most people brushing their teeth at once: 26,382

Set November 7, 2019, in Bhubaneshwar, India
Now this is a record we can get behind! Four years ago, this event was arranged by the Indian Association of Public Health Dentistry and their partners to promote the importance of dental hygiene and lifelong oral health habits.

Should I try this at home? If you have 26,000 friends and a lot of extra fluoride toothpaste, have at it! But it’s more practical to just stick with a healthy daily brushing routine of twice a day for two minutes each time.



WORLD RECORD
3

Most bottle caps removed with teeth in one minute: 68

Set September 17, 2011, in Bangalore, India, by Murali K.C.
This record was no spur-of-the-moment feat. Four eyewitnesses, local media, and a video camera all captured Murali’s record-setting feat, which was planned in advance.

Should I try this at home? No way! Opening any container with your mouth can cut your gums, chip your teeth, or damage your tooth enamel. Use a bottle opener or another tool instead.

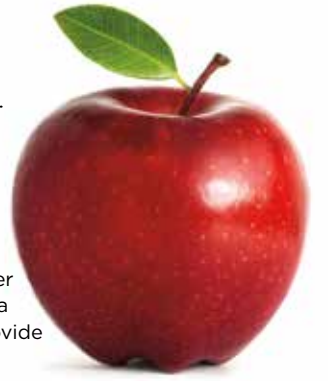


WORLD RECORD
4

Most apples held in the mouth and cut by chainsaw in one minute: 28

Set November 30, 2020, in Dezhou, Shandong, China, by Wang Lei
Wang Lei, a professional acrobat and performer, set the record because he wanted to show people something they had never seen before.

Should I try this at home? No. This seems self-explanatory, but just so we’re clear — chainsaws and teeth simply don’t mix. However, it is great to eat apples without the power tools. Crunchy fruits and vegetables are good for your teeth because they stimulate saliva production, which washes away debris and helps keep your mouth clean. Apples also provide vitamin C for strong teeth and gums.



WORLD RECORD
5

Most ice cubes moved by mouth in one minute: 54 ounces of ice

Set on March 4, 2017, in Augsburg, Germany, by André Ortolf
André is a serial record holder, with more than 100 world records to his name.

Should I try this at home? This one doesn’t seem as harmful, but ice can be surprisingly risky for your teeth. Chewing or biting down on ice (which seems inevitable for this record) can damage your tooth enamel, loosen a crown, and chip or crack a tooth.



Bonus
WORLD RECORD

Most tennis balls held in the mouth by a dog: 6

Set February 23, 2020, in Canandaigua, New York, by Finley Molloy
We just wanted to give Finley some credit for his hard work. Good boy, Finley!



The main takeaway: World records are fun to read about, but we don’t recommend you pursue one unless you are sure there won’t be any risks to your oral and overall health. Instead, set a personal record for clean teeth and gums by brushing twice and flossing once, each and every day!



COMMISSIONED BY DELTA DENTAL

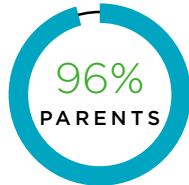
The 2023 State of America's ORAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS REPORT

Delta Dental's recently released report is a nationwide analysis of consumer opinions and behaviors related to oral health. It's packed with unique insights on further advancing the health and wellness of Americans. Here's a small sample of what our research uncovered.

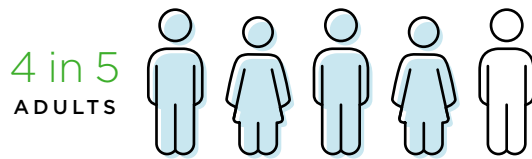
People continue to recognize the importance of oral health



consider oral health to be very important to overall health



Preventive care helps avoid serious dental issues and expenses



who maintained regular dental office visits did not require future unexpected care

Cost savings and better health are the top motivators of proper oral care



87%
TO SAVE MONEY
or avoid unexpected costs



66%
TO PREVENT
TOOTH DECAY

At Delta Dental, we're committed to creating better health outcomes for all. [Learn more and read the full report at \[deltadental.com\]\(https://deltadental.com\).](#)