

# grin!®

## SPOOKY SMILE RISKS

**LITTLE KNOWN FACTS:**  
The link between tooth and  
sinus infections

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**5 TIPS FOR**  
hosting a happy  
Thanksgiving



NEWS + RESEARCH

- 3 Little known facts and misconceptions: the link between tooth and sinus infections
- 15 Defining premium, deductible, copay, and coinsurance

WELLNESS + NUTRITION

- 6 Ingredient spotlight: beets
- 7 Mouth-friendly recipes: dark chocolate beet brownies, rosemary roasted beets and carrots
- 8 How football helmets protect your teeth, jaw, and eyes
- 12 Spooky smile risks

FUN + INSPIRATION

- 4 5 tips for hosting a happy Thanksgiving
- 11 A smile success story: funding future dentists

## Little known facts and misconceptions: THE LINK BETWEEN TOOTH AND SINUS INFECTIONS



Our mouths and our sinuses are connected in many ways. On the positive side, our senses of taste and smell can complement each other, making a favorite meal even more delicious. But your mouth and your sinuses can also be linked by bacteria and infection:

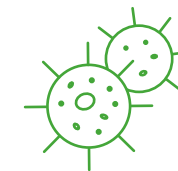


- A **tooth infection**, also called a dental abscess, happens when harmful bacteria reach the nerve of a tooth.



- A **sinus infection** is when bacteria is trapped in your sinuses, causing pain and inflammation.

How can bacteria from your mouth cause a stuffy nose?  
Why can a sinus problem cause a toothache? Let's find out.



### When mouth bacteria meets your sinuses

Here's how bacteria spreads from your mouth to your sinuses:

- There are sinuses located behind your cheekbones and above your teeth.
- Bacteria from a tooth infection or gum disease can reach these sinuses and cause secondary infections.
- The sinus infection can lead to swelling, pain, and pressure in your cheeks and upper teeth.



### When sinuses strike back

Sinus infections can also cause dental issues:

- Inflamed sinus tissue can push on the roots of your teeth and cause aching pain that may feel like a cavity.
- Sinus infections can cause mucus to drain down the back of your throat and create bad breath.
- Sinus problems, congestion, and swelling can make it more difficult to chew and swallow.



### Guard your grin, so you can breathe easy

You can protect your teeth, gums, and sinuses with regular oral health care:

- Brush twice and floss once daily.
- Consider using an antimicrobial mouthwash to reduce oral bacteria.
- Drink plenty of water to thin mucus and keep your mouth clean.
- Avoid smoking and other pollutants that may irritate your nasal passages.



### Spot the signs and speak with your dentist

If you have upper tooth pain along with a stuffy or runny nose, the issues may be linked. Visit your dentist for dental problems and your doctor for sinus care. Treating both early helps you breathe easier and smile brighter!



# 5 tips for hosting a HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is all about gratitude, gathering, and of course, great food. But if you're hosting, you probably feel a bit of pressure! Here are a few ways to ensure everyone leaves your holiday party feeling happy, healthy, and satisfied.



1

## FEATURE MOUTH AND EYE-FRIENDLY FOODS

Turkey is a lean, healthy protein, so you're set for the main course. Here are a few more timeless classics that also pack a nutritional punch:

- Sweet potatoes deliver vitamins A and C to maintain your vision and strengthen your gums.
- Green beans are rich in calcium for strong teeth and bones.
- Pumpkin sides and desserts can boost vitamin A, nourishing both your enamel and your corneas.



2

## SWAP (OR REDUCE) SUGAR IN SIDES AND DESSERTS

Sugar feeds the bacteria in your mouth, contributing to cavities and gum disease. Plan your menu to cut out excess sugar:

- Find a cranberry sauce recipe with fresh fruit and maple syrup or honey to sweeten.
- Cook sweet potato casserole with warm spices like cinnamon and nutmeg instead of brown sugar.
- For dessert, offer dark chocolate-dipped fruits instead of heavy pies.



3

## KEEP GUESTS HYDRATED

Proper hydration helps keep your mouth clean, prevents dry mouth, and maintains clear vision. To keep your guests hydrated and serve less sugar:

- Place pitchers of water on every table.
- Consider water infused with cucumber or fruit to make it more appealing.
- Offer a non-caffeinated herbal tea after dinner. This also helps digest food.



4

## PLAN AHEAD AND REDUCE STRESS

Before the party, sit down and plan out everything you need:

- Draft your menu and shopping list in advance.
- Prep make-ahead dishes before the day of the party.
- Label serving dishes and utensils so helpers know where everything goes.



5

## DELEGATE AND ENJOY THE DAY

The best way to reduce stress before and during the big day? Don't do it all yourself!

- Invite guests to bring one dish or handle appetizers.
- Assign simple tasks, such as setting the table, refilling drinks, or carving the turkey.
- Share your cooking schedule with anyone who is helping in the kitchen. That way, everyone can help make sure the meal runs smoothly.

Hosting a holiday party? Follow the five tips above and you're well on your way to hosting a low-stress, delicious, and nutritious Thanksgiving feast.

INGREDIENT SPOTLIGHT



We've got the beet

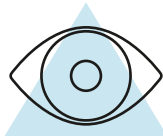
Bright, earthy beets are fall's hidden nutritional superstar. As a side dish or a dessert, these ruby-red root vegetables are packed with nutrients that support your smile, vision, and overall health! Just a few of the standout benefits include:



Fiber lowers your risk for heart disease and prevents dry mouth.



Antioxidants reduce inflammation and your risk for gum disease, high blood pressure, and Type 2 diabetes.



Vitamin A is an essential nutrient for strong, healthy eyes.



MOUTH-FRIENDLY RECIPE



Dark chocolate beet brownies

Chewy on the edges and gooey in the center, these delicious and nutritious brownies are ready to support your smile and delight your taste buds.

INGREDIENTS:

- |                                   |                             |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2 medium beets, boiled and peeled | ¼ teaspoon salt             |
| 2 sticks unsalted butter          | 4 eggs, at room temperature |
| 8 ounces dark chocolate chips     | 1 teaspoon vanilla extract  |
| 1¼ cups white whole wheat flour   | 1 cup golden brown sugar    |
| 1 teaspoon baking powder          | Parchment paper             |
|                                   | Sea salt (to garnish)       |

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Peel the beets, cut them into quarters, and blend until pureed.
- 2 Preheat the oven to 350° F and line a brownie pan with parchment paper.
- 3 In a saucepan, melt the butter and chocolate over low heat and stir until smooth. Set aside to cool.
- 4 In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.
- 5 Using a stand mixer, gently mix the eggs on low for about 30 seconds.
- 6 Add the vanilla and brown sugar, then mix on medium-high for 2 minutes.
- 7 Reduce speed to low. Add the beet puree, then slowly add the chocolate mixture until combined.
- 8 Add the flour mixture and mix just until combined.
- 9 Pour batter into the prepared brownie pan and smooth top with a rubber spatula.
- 10 Bake for 25 to 30 minutes. Cool for 5 minutes, garnish with sea salt, then cut and serve.



Rosemary roasted beets and carrots

With vitamin C and fiber, these roasted beets and carrots are a tasty way to support your oral, vision, and digestive health.

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 medium beets
- 4 large carrots
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 3-4 sprigs fresh rosemary
- Optional: Goat cheese*

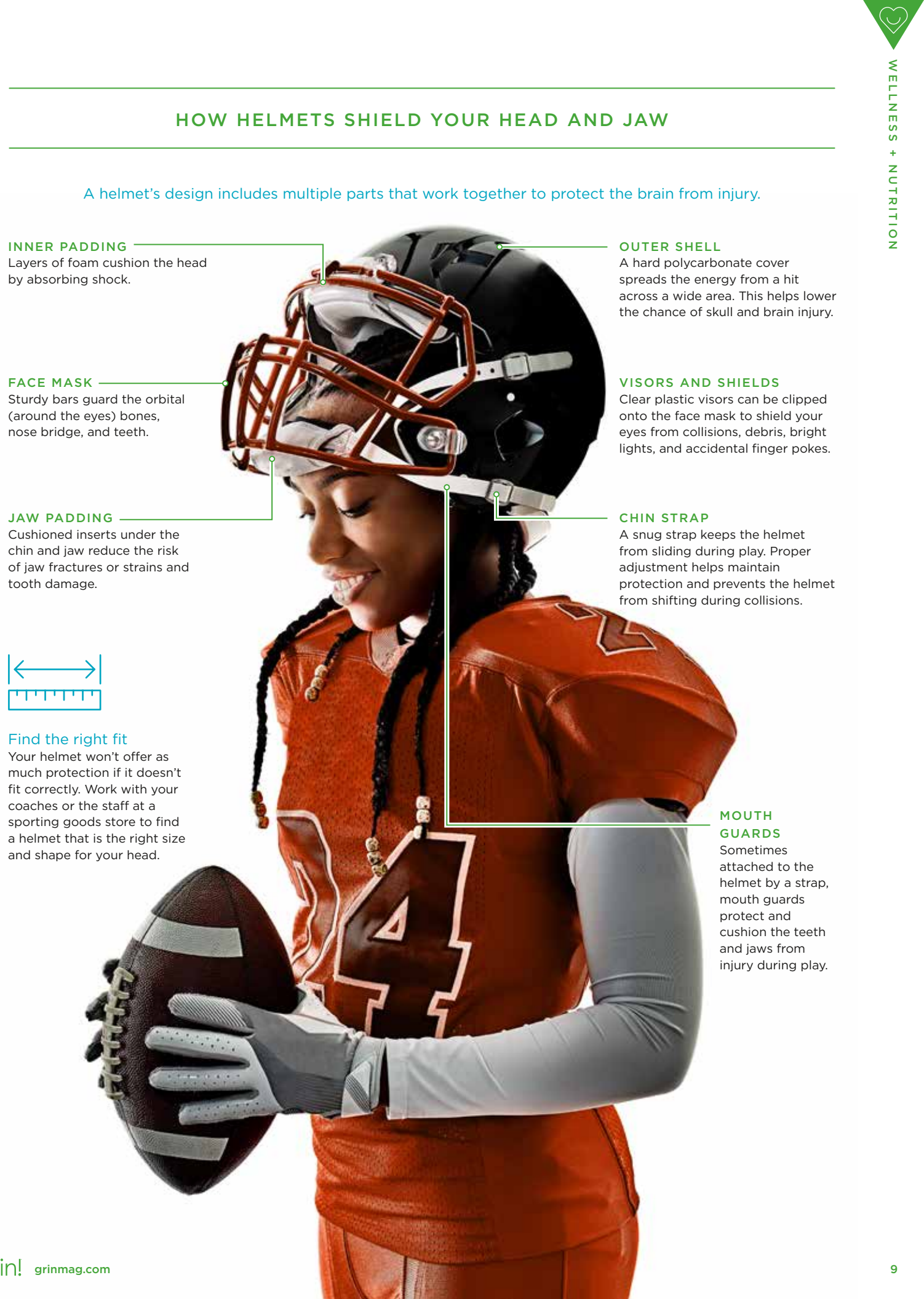
DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Preheat oven to 450° F.
- 2 Cut carrots in half, then into 2-inch pieces.
- 3 Peel the beets and cut into quarters or cubes.
- 4 In a bowl or on a rimmed baking sheet, toss the beets and carrots with the vinegar, oil, rosemary, salt, and pepper.
- 5 Transfer to a pan and roast vegetables for about 35 minutes, tossing once, until tender.
- 6 Garnish vegetables with goat cheese or fresh rosemary sprigs and serve.



# HOW FOOTBALL HELMETS PROTECT YOUR TEETH, JAW, AND EYES

Football is a thrilling fall sport, but it comes with some danger — especially from hard hits and tackles. A well-fitted helmet helps keep players safe by protecting the skull, eyes, teeth, and jaw. It uses strong materials, padding, and secure straps to absorb and spread out the force of collisions.



## HOW HELMETS SHIELD YOUR HEAD AND JAW

A helmet's design includes multiple parts that work together to protect the brain from injury.

### INNER PADDING

Layers of foam cushion the head by absorbing shock.

### OUTER SHELL

A hard polycarbonate cover spreads the energy from a hit across a wide area. This helps lower the chance of skull and brain injury.

### FACE MASK

Sturdy bars guard the orbital (around the eyes) bones, nose bridge, and teeth.

### VISORS AND SHIELDS

Clear plastic visors can be clipped onto the face mask to shield your eyes from collisions, debris, bright lights, and accidental finger pokes.

### JAW PADDING

Cushioned inserts under the chin and jaw reduce the risk of jaw fractures or strains and tooth damage.

### CHIN STRAP

A snug strap keeps the helmet from sliding during play. Proper adjustment helps maintain protection and prevents the helmet from shifting during collisions.



### Find the right fit

Your helmet won't offer as much protection if it doesn't fit correctly. Work with your coaches or the staff at a sporting goods store to find a helmet that is the right size and shape for your head.

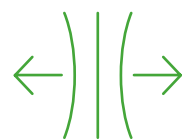
### MOUTH GUARDS

Sometimes attached to the helmet by a strap, mouth guards protect and cushion the teeth and jaws from injury during play.



# NEW TECH FOR BETTER PROTECTION

From basic leather caps to modern plastic marvels, football helmets have evolved quite a bit over the years. This is especially true at the college and professional level, where new technology continues to make the sport safer:



## FLEXIBLE OUTER SHELLS

Modern materials bend slightly on impact to reduce force transfer to the skull.



## SMART SENSORS

Built-in impact sensors track hit force in real time, alerting coaches to possible head injuries.



## POSITION-SPECIFIC DESIGNS

Helmets made for quarterbacks or linemen use shape and padding tuned to the types of hits each position faces.



## CUSTOM 3D-PRINTED PADDING

Pro teams can scan a player's head to create padding that fits perfectly, boosting comfort and safety.



## Play safe — and don't forget your mouth guard!

Helmets protect your head, jaw, and eyes, but a mouth guard is still essential! A well-fitted mouth guard cushions your teeth and gums against direct hits. This greatly reduces risk for chipped teeth, dental injuries, and facial lacerations.



## A SMILE SUCCESS STORY: Funding future dentists

As the school year begins, students everywhere are thinking about new classes, new goals — and for some, even their future careers. But for many people, becoming a dentist can seem out of reach. That's where Delta Dental is making a big difference.

### Bringing oral health care to every community

Through community education and charitable funding, Delta Dental strives to help students of all ages get the support they need to become the next generation of oral healthcare professionals. Here are two ways we help:



#### Delta Dental Institute's Future Workforce Fund:

Each year, Delta Dental Institute awards up to \$1 million for projects that spark school-aged children's interest in oral health careers. These grants support hands-on workshops, mentorship programs, and career fairs that bring dental science to life.



#### Scholarships and loan repayment programs:

High tuition costs can keep students from choosing a career in healthcare. That's why Delta Dental offers scholarships and debt-repayment awards for dental and hygiene students who commit to working in underserved areas.

### Why do these programs matter?



Because people often get better care when it comes from someone who understands their community. If a dentist grew up in a rural area or an underserved neighborhood, they're more likely to return there to work — and help others get the care they need.



Not only does this help create jobs and build stronger communities, but it also means more people can access dental care where they live. And that's good news for everyone.



### Support for generations of smiles

At Delta Dental, the goal is simple: support students today so they can care for others tomorrow. **Learn more about how Delta Dental is investing in the future of health at [deltadentalinstitute.com/cir](https://deltadentalinstitute.com/cir).**

# SPOOKY

SMILE

# RISKS

Halloween is a blast for adults — fun costumes, festive drinks, and sweet treats. But candy and cocktails can raise your oral health risks, and certain costumes might hurt your eyes, teeth, and gums. Understanding these hidden dangers helps you celebrate the spooky season safely.

# WHEN CANDY AND COCKTAILS ATTACK

Sweets and cocktails are party staples, but they feed oral bacteria and dry out your mouth.



**Sticky candies** cling to teeth, fueling acid production that erodes enamel.



**Hard candies** such as jawbreakers can strain your jaw joints, damage fillings and crowns, or chip your teeth.



**Alcohol** reduces saliva flow, causing dry mouth and giving cavity-causing germs a boost.



**Sugary cocktails** add extra risk — be mindful of sodas and mixers that are packed with added sugar.

# VAMPIRE FANGS HAVE A BIT OF BITE

Novelty fangs and teeth may complete your costume, but beware — they may bite back.



**Plastic fangs** and similar gear can rub against or cut your gums and trap food or bacteria against your teeth.



**Keeping non-food items in your mouth** can alter your bite, leading to jaw soreness, chipped teeth, or cracked fillings.



**Costume masks** that force unnatural positions may strain your jaw and trigger headaches.



# BE CAUTIOUS WITH COLORED CONTACTS

Colored lenses are certainly spooky, but not for the reasons you may think. Using non-prescription lenses that are not fitted by an optometrist can cause a lot of damage:



**Non-prescription colored contacts** can scratch the cornea, cause infections, and if worn for an extended periods of time, can even lead to blindness.



**Decorative lenses** often let in less oxygen, which can lead to dry eye, bacterial growth, or even a painful sore called a corneal ulceration.



**If you plan to wear colored contacts,** visit your optometrist for an eye exam and lens fitting before Halloween.



**Always buy FDA-approved lenses** with a valid prescription and follow care instructions.



**Did you know?** It is illegal to buy colored contacts without a prescription, even if you don't need vision correction.



# MAKE A HEALTHY SMILE YOUR EVERYDAY COSTUME

Keep fright night fun and shield your smile and vision with these party-ready tips:



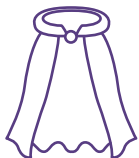
**Indulge wisely** when your sweet tooth strikes. Limit the sticky candies you consume and enjoy dark chocolate instead — it has less sugar than traditional chocolate, plus it provides fiber and antioxidants!



**Sip water** between beverages to wash down food, stay hydrated, and boost saliva flow.



**Don't skip your oral health routine!** Brush and floss before bed, especially if you've had candy and cocktails.



**Choose a costume that uses safe materials** like temporary makeup and soft props instead of fangs, non-prescription contacts, and other potentially harmful items.

Enjoy all the haunted grins and eerie eyes this Halloween — just don't let costumes, cocktails, and candy harm your oral or vision health!



# DEFINING premium, deductible, copay, and coinsurance

Oral and vision health benefits can feel confusing, but knowing a few key terms can help you plan for costs and make the most of your coverage. With that in mind, let's define four important words — premium, deductible, copay, and coinsurance — so you can understand how each influences what you pay for checkups, cleanings, and more.



**Premium**  
Your premium is the regular payment that keeps your dental and vision plans active. It is often monthly but can also be quarterly or annual. If your employer covers part of the cost, you'll pay the remainder. Knowing your premium helps you budget for coverage even before you visit the dentist.



**Deductible**  
A deductible is the amount you must pay for covered services before your dental plan starts to pay. For example, if your deductible is \$50, you pay the first \$50 of treatment, then your plan will pay its portion.



**Copay**  
A copay is a fixed amount you pay for a specific dental service. For example, your plan might require a \$20 copay for a routine cleaning or \$50 for a filling. You pay this amount at the time of service, and it won't change based on the total cost of the treatment — so you'll know exactly what to pay before you begin! Copays do not typically count toward your deductible or your out-of-pocket maximum.



**Coinsurance**  
Coinsurance is similar to a copay, but it is always expressed as a percentage of the total charge. For example, if your plan covers 80% of a treatment, your coinsurance, the amount you pay, is 20%. Coinsurance applies after you meet your deductible.



**The more you know**  
Understanding these four terms is a great start that empowers you to compare plans, estimate expenses, and choose the coverage that best fits your budget. Review the specifics of your plan so you know your deductible, any copays or coinsurance, and how much they cover.

# The State of America's Oral Health and Wellness

Most adults understand that regular visits to the dentist are vital for protecting your smile, but that's not the only reason to book an appointment.

## WHAT MOTIVATES ADULTS TO SEEK PREVENTIVE ORAL HEALTH CARE?



54% want to take full advantage of their dental benefits.



64% of adults schedule regular checkups to minimize the risk of future problems.



90% agree that addressing oral health issues early saves money in the long run.



87% feel their dental appointment is as important as their annual physical.



### Preventive care helps you avoid unexpected issues

This year, the frequency of preventive visits has remained steady, while unexpected trips to the dentist have dropped. **That's encouraging proof that your dentist helps you catch — and address — problems early, before treatment becomes more invasive and expensive.**

## LEARN MORE ABOUT U.S. DENTAL CARE TRENDS

Find more up-to-date insights about consumer behaviors relating to oral health and **download the full report at [www.deltadental.com/us/en/state-of-americas-oral-health-report.html](http://www.deltadental.com/us/en/state-of-americas-oral-health-report.html)**