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Detecting
diabetes:
your mouth may be key

Healthy favorites
for the holidays

More meatless
alternatives to
beef and chicken

5 reasons for
nightmares
about your teeth

in this issue of
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WELLNESS + NUTRITION



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Help a loved one with Alzheimer's disease have better oral health

People with Alzheimer's disease often have multiple oral health problems. Learn common dental issues associated with the disease and how to help prevent them.

NEWS + RESEARCH



The important role of vitamin D

Vitamin D is the unsung hero in helping build strong teeth and bones. Find out how it works and discover ways to get more vitamin D in your diet.

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On topic with Dr. Dill: manage your stress to protect your health

Everyone gets stressed at times. Maybe you're going through some life changes, are worried about a situation or just can't seem to get through everything on your to-do list. These overwhelming feelings can not only be tough on your mental health — they can also take a toll on your body.

That's because when you feel stressed, your body produces increased levels of a hormone called cortisol. High levels of cortisol make you more prone to oral health problems such as gum disease, canker sores, cold sores and teeth grinding.

But the effects don't end there. Stress can also drain your energy and make it more difficult to sleep. You may experience headaches, weight gain and trouble concentrating or remembering things. Research has also linked high levels of stress with infections, high blood pressure, diabetes and osteoporosis.

In your day-to-day life, stress can cause you to get off track with self-care. It can even lead to habits harmful to your health such as tobacco use or excessive alcohol consumption. To keep yourself well, maintain these five healthy habits:



1 **Exercise for 30 minutes each day.** Even just a walk around the neighborhood will do. Getting outside and soaking up some sunshine can improve your mood.



2 **Go to bed at a consistent time and make time to unwind.** Try yoga or meditation before bed or listen to some music to help you relax.



3 **Stock your pantry and fridge with healthy foods.** Choose fresh fruits and veggies, fish and other lean proteins, milk, cheese and beans.



4 **Stay hydrated with plenty of water.** Decaffeinated black or green tea can also provide health and relaxation benefits. Just skip the lemon and honey, as acids and sweets can contribute to tooth decay.



5 **Make self-care a priority.** Remember to keep up with your hygiene habits, including brushing and flossing. And make time for things you enjoy — whether that's reading, working on a fun project or watching your favorite show.

Be good to yourself by finding ways to take care of your mind and body each day. Just the act of smiling can help! By taking steps to manage your stress, you'll protect your oral and overall health. That'll give you plenty of reasons to smile in the future. ■



Meet Delta Dental's Vice President of Dental Science and Network Strategy, Joseph Dill, DDS. With more than 30 years of experience in the dental field, including eight in private practice and 16 in dental insurance, Dr. Dill provides expert insights and helpful advice to keep you smiling bright.

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Mouth-friendly recipe: sweet potato burgers

Looking to add a few meatless meals to your weekly menu? This option is a great way to enjoy extra veggies! It's a perfect combination of savory and spicy — and it's packed with delicious herbs and spices. Try topping with avocado, spinach or red onion, then get ready to satisfy your burger craving.

Ingredients:

2/3 cup mashed, boiled sweet potato (or about 1/2 medium peeled and cooked sweet potato)
15 ounces canned white beans, rinsed and drained
3/4 cup whole-wheat breadcrumbs
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
4 tablespoons dried cilantro
1/2 teaspoon turmeric
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt
Ground black pepper, to taste
Nonstick cooking spray
4 whole-wheat hamburger buns
Toppings of your choice

Directions:

- 1 Place mashed sweet potato and white beans into a food processor. Blend until well combined, then transfer mixture to a large bowl.
- 2 Add whole-wheat breadcrumbs, ginger, garlic powder, cilantro, turmeric, cayenne and salt. Generously season with pepper. Mix ingredients together well. Adjust seasonings and add pepper to taste.
- 3 Use your hands to form four, tightly packed patties about 1/2-inch thick. Place on a plate, cover with plastic wrap and put in the fridge for 10 to 15 minutes.
- 4 Spray skillet with nonstick cooking spray and place over medium heat. Add each burger to the skillet and cook about 2 to 4 minutes on each side until golden brown.
- 5 Remove from heat and transfer to buns or lettuce wraps. Add your favorite toppings.
- 6 Enjoy! ■

Turmeric is known for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

White beans are rich in calcium, which keeps teeth strong and is good for oral health.

Boiled sweet potatoes, with their fiber contents, slow down blood sugar spikes.

History of oral health: the source of our sweet and spooky traditions

Today's family-friendly Halloween traditions of candy, jack-o'-lanterns and kids dressed as their favorite animals and superheroes are lighthearted versions of rituals that started in Europe many years ago.

50 B.C.		The ancient Celtic festival called Samhain marked harvest's end and winter's beginning in Ireland, the United Kingdom and northern France. It was also a time when they believed the dead came back to earth. People built huge bonfires and wore costumes to chase away ghosts.
43 A.D.		The Samhain festival evolved to include a Roman tradition honoring Pomona, the goddess of fruit and trees. She was represented by an apple, a fruit that still plays a role in modern-day fall and Halloween traditions.
609 A.D.		Samhain traditions became part of a three-day festival from Oct. 31 to Nov. 2 that included All Hallows' Eve, All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. The celebration honored saints, martyrs and the dead. During the festival, turnips were carved into jack-o'-lanterns.
1800s		European immigrants brought Halloween traditions to America. Irish "mumming" and German "belsnickling" involved dressing in costume and going house-to-house for cakes. Americans began using pumpkins instead of turnips for jack-o'-lanterns. The holiday started becoming more about community and kids, and less about death and ghosts.
1950s		Trick-or-treating as we know it, when kids go door-to-door collecting candy, was established in American culture. Historians point to a "Peanuts" comic strip and a Disney cartoon featuring trick-or-treating in the 1950s to help pinpoint when the tradition started.

Halloween can be scary for your oral health. Keep your celebration healthy and reduce your chances of tooth decay by:

- Filling up on a healthy meal before indulging in sweets.
- Choosing plain chocolate, which melts faster than other candies.
- Avoiding hard and sticky candies such as lollipops, gummy bears and taffy.
- Drinking water to wash away sugar left behind by treats.
- Brushing and flossing regularly, but especially after eating Halloween goodies. ■



Readers ask, we answer

Aidan asks:
"Can I get sick from my toothbrush?"

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

Hi, Aidan! Neither the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) nor the American Dental Association report any evidence showing that your toothbrush will make you sick. Still, your brush does become contaminated by millions of bacteria in your mouth, on your hands and in your bathroom. That's why it's best to clean your brush thoroughly after each use, store it properly and not share it with others.

Here are five ways to keep your toothbrush clean and reduce the chances of germs becoming a problem:

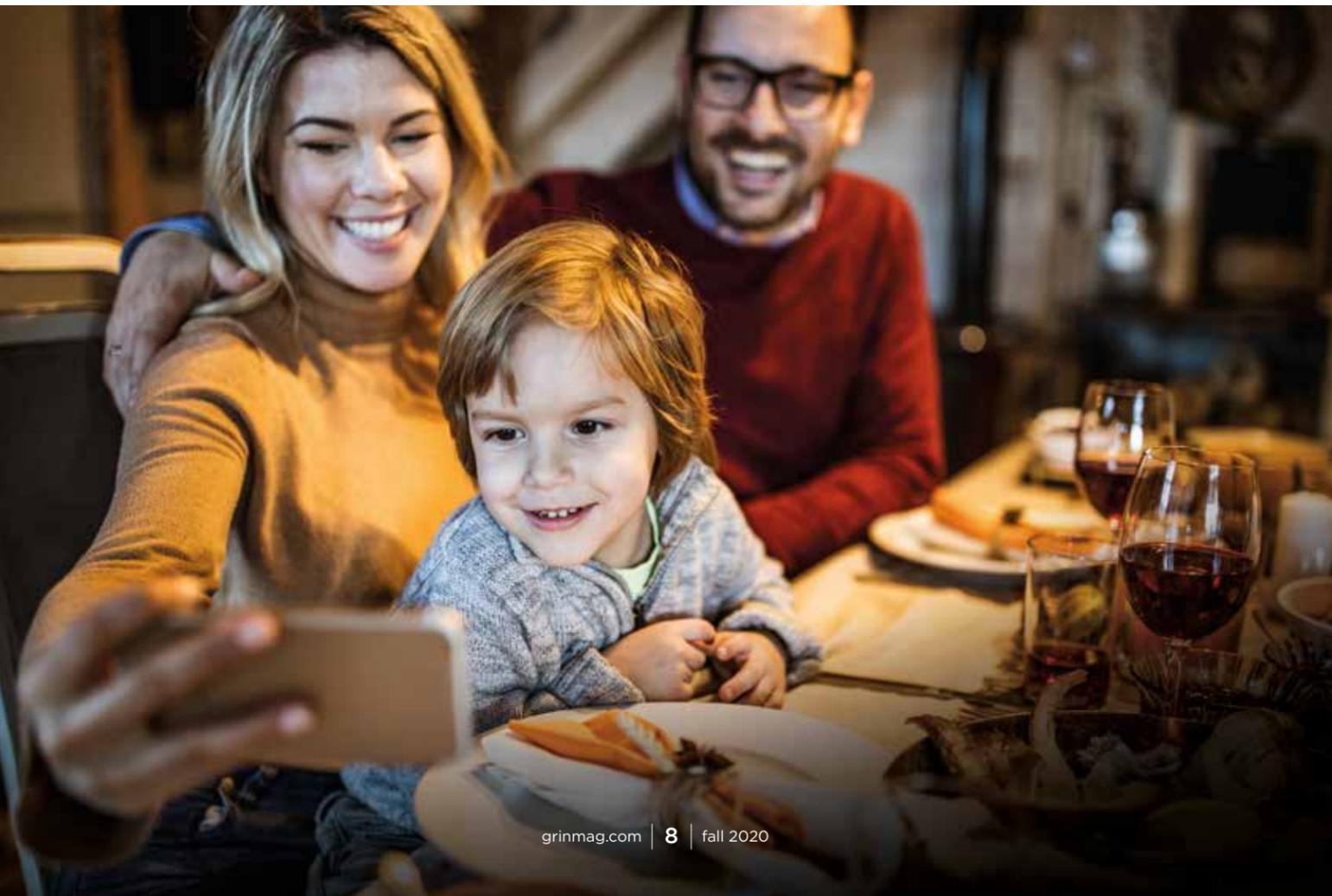
- 1 Rinse your toothbrush thoroughly with tap water before and after you brush.**
Try to get all the toothpaste out of the bristles so the brush is completely clean.
- 2 Don't share your toothbrush with anyone else.**
It's OK to share toothpaste as long as the tip of the tube doesn't directly touch your toothbrush. Just avoid sharing toothpaste when someone in your family is sick.
- 3 Store your toothbrush upright, not touching other brushes.**
Let it air dry. Bacteria is more likely to grow on your brush if it is in a drawer or holder without good air flow.
- 4 Be sure your toothbrush is kept at least 6 feet away from the toilet.**
And always close the lid before flushing.
- 5 Replace your toothbrush every 3 months or when the bristles become frayed.**
If your toothbrush is worn, it will be less effective.

Taking these steps can help keep your toothbrush clean and keep bacteria at bay. Just don't rely on DIY methods of sanitizing. The CDC does not recommend soaking your toothbrush in a disinfectant or mouthwash, or placing it under ultraviolet light. Also avoid putting your toothbrush in the dishwasher or microwave. ■

Healthy favorites

FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Bring the taste of autumn to your holiday meals this year. From apple to pumpkin to rosemary, these dishes are bursting with fall flavor. As an added bonus, each recipe contains items that can be purchased in advance and kept in your freezer or pantry. That means less last-minute grocery shopping and more time to enjoy your family and your meal.



APPETIZER: cheese board

The sweet and savory combination of cheese, fruit and nuts makes this cheese board a favorite that won't fill you up before the main course. Easily customize this dish with what you have on hand — just try to avoid adding starchy or sugary items that could hurt your teeth, such as crackers or jam.



HEALTH BENEFITS:

- **Apples** generate saliva as you chew, helping wash away bacteria and prevent cavities.
- **Almonds** are an excellent source of antioxidants that help protect your body and reduce the risk of disease.

INGREDIENTS:

½ cup blueberries (fresh or frozen)
2 apples
Assorted cheeses, such as cheddar and blue cheese
¼ cup almonds
¼ cup cashews

DIRECTIONS:

1. If using frozen fruit, thaw unopened bag of frozen fruit by placing it in the refrigerator or running it under cool water.
2. Thinly slice apples and cut cheese into chunks.
3. Place apple slices and chunks of cheese on a large board.
4. Add small bowls of nuts and blueberries.

SHOPPING TIPS:

Unopened hard and soft cheeses are freezer-friendly. In fact, hard cheeses can last up to eight months in the freezer!

MAIN DISH: roast beef

Simple herbs can transform your meat into a tender, juicy roast that's full of flavor. Choose your favorite kind of beef — whether that's top round, sirloin or eye of round — to make this hearty meal.



HEALTH BENEFITS:

- **Beef** is packed with protein and phosphorus that can strengthen your teeth.
- **Thyme** fights bacteria in your mouth and helps ward off bad breath.

INGREDIENTS:

4 pound roast (top round, sirloin or eye of round)
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon rosemary
1 tablespoon thyme
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 450 F.
2. Combine oil, garlic, rosemary, thyme, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Rub on roast.
3. Place beef in pan and roast for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 325 F and roast up to 2 hours more, depending on how well done you'd like your meat to be.
4. Let the roast sit for 15 to 30 minutes before serving.

SHOPPING TIPS:

Buy the meat in advance and freeze until you're ready to cook. Uncooked roasts can last up to a full year in the freezer.

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SIDE DISH:
roasted Brussels sprouts

Adding veggies to your meal doesn't have to be boring or bland. Roasting Brussels sprouts with some Parmesan cheese gives them a delightful crispiness and creates a tasty side dish.



HEALTH BENEFITS:

- **Brussels sprouts** are rich in vitamin K, which supports the health of your jaw bone.
- **Parmesan** has very little lactose — making it a great source of calcium and protein, even if you're lactose intolerant.

INGREDIENTS:

24 ounces frozen Brussels sprouts
 ½ cup olive oil
 ½ teaspoon pepper
 1 teaspoon salt
 ½ teaspoon garlic powder
 ½ teaspoon onion powder
 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 400 F.
2. Place Brussels sprouts in a bowl. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with pepper, salt, garlic powder and onion powder. Toss until fully coated.
3. Spread seasoned Brussels sprouts in an even layer on a nonstick baking sheet. Roast for 10 minutes.
4. Remove from oven. Cut each Brussels sprout in half and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.
5. Roast for up to 40 minutes more, shaking the pan every 15 minutes until edges are brown and crispy.

SHOPPING TIPS:

Freshly grated Parmesan can be stored in the fridge for up to three weeks. Frozen Brussels sprouts taste great and have just as many nutrients.

DESSERT:
pumpkin cheesecake mousse

Few desserts are both tasty and good for you. Try this pumpkin cheesecake mousse for a light, fluffy and creamy end to your meal that's perfect for the season. This dessert is sugar-free, low in carbs, gluten free and keto friendly.



HEALTH BENEFITS:

- **Pumpkin** is rich in vitamin A, helping keep your gums and other soft tissues in your mouth healthy.
- **Cream cheese** contains riboflavin, which also keeps the inside of your mouth healthy.

INGREDIENTS:

16 ounces cream cheese
 15 ounces canned pumpkin
 2 cups heavy cream
 ¼ teaspoon salt
 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
 1-2 teaspoons sugar substitute (such as stevia or xylitol)
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 Sugar-free whipped topping

DIRECTIONS:

1. Blend cream cheese and pumpkin in a large bowl until smooth.
2. Stir in heavy cream, salt, pumpkin pie spice, sugar substitute and vanilla extract.
3. Whip until fluffy.
4. Taste and add more sugar substitute, if desired.
5. Scoop into individual bowls or serving glasses.
6. Chill for an hour before serving.
7. Add a dollop of sugar-free whipped topping.

SHOPPING TIPS:

Cans of pumpkin can be purchased throughout the year, so stock up! Cream cheese can last up to two months past the expiration date in your freezer.

Can't be with loved ones this holiday? Enjoy their company with a virtual meal together. Or make some homemade cards or gifts to send them. Those are sure to keep them smiling and show you care! ■



The power of a smile: 3 ways fortune smiles on those with healthy grins

Smiling can benefit your relationships, health and overall success.

- 1 **Stronger relationships**
Smiling can be a game-changer throughout a relationship. For instance, 70% of Americans say a smile can make or break a first impression.¹ Wider smiles have even been connected to longer-lasting and more satisfying marriages.² Perhaps smiles can help relationships because they make you more attractive.

Surveys show that:

47% OF AMERICANS RATE A SMILE
as a person's most attractive feature.³

69% SAY THEY ARE MORE LIKELY
TO BE ATTRACTED
to someone who smiles often.⁴

- 2 **Better health**
Smiling is associated with numerous health benefits, including lowering stress, helping you relax, relieving pain and lifting your mood. Flashing a smile can also lower your blood pressure and heart rate. One study even linked a wider smile to a longer lifespan.
- 3 **Greater success**
Research indicates that a smile makes you appear more capable. Good oral health also makes more than two-thirds of Americans feel confident.⁵ No wonder more than half of adults in the U.S. connect their smile to their overall success.⁶

Good oral health is key to keeping a healthy smile. Brush twice a day, floss daily, maintain a healthy diet and see your dentist regularly — at least once a year. More than 3 out of 4 adults who visit the dentist at least once a year say they like their smile.⁷ ■

^{1,3-7}2018 Delta Dental Adult's Oral Health & Well-Being Survey
²University of California, Berkeley

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Detecting diabetes: your mouth may be key



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The long-term effects of diabetes can damage the heart, nerves, kidneys, eyes, feet and mouth. Treatment can help minimize serious complications, which makes early diagnosis extremely important.

However, more than 7 million Americans aren't aware they have diabetes.¹ Make sure to pay close attention to your oral health because many of the symptoms and complications of diabetes are frequently present in the mouth.

34,000,000

people in the U.S. have some form of diabetes,² a disease caused by insulin problems that lead to high blood sugar.

Look for these symptoms of diabetes.

There are many symptoms of diabetes, including increased thirst, extreme hunger, unexplained weight loss, frequent urination, slow healing sores, fatigue, irritability and blurred vision.

Diabetes can have a big influence on your oral health.

It's important for diabetics to control blood sugar levels because high blood sugar can raise the risk of these oral complications:

- **Gum disease** often occurs at a younger age in diabetics and can lead to redness, bleeding and swelling in the gums, mouth pain, loose teeth, persistent bad breath or difficulty chewing.
- **Cavities** may be caused by high blood sugar in saliva, which feeds the bacteria that cause tooth decay.
- **Dry mouth** is one of the most frequent oral health issues for diabetics. Decreased saliva causes dryness in the mouth. Combined with high sugar, it may lead to cavities. The lack of moisture in the mouth can also make saliva thick and stringy, which can cause difficulty swallowing.
- **Oral lesions and infections** are also sometimes present in diabetics. The most common is thrush — a yeast infection that produces sore white or red patches.
- **Problems tasting food**, as diabetics are more prone to taste disorders, which can also be caused by medicine used to treat diabetes.
- **Painful burning or tingling sensations** in the mouth, known as burning mouth syndrome, which is linked to poorly controlled blood sugar levels.

^{1,2}Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Continued from page 13



Not only is gum disease more frequent and often more severe among diabetics, but people with both diabetes and gum disease also have greater difficulty controlling their blood sugar levels. This is likely because of inflammation caused by bacteria in the infected gums.

Preventive exams can help detect diabetes.

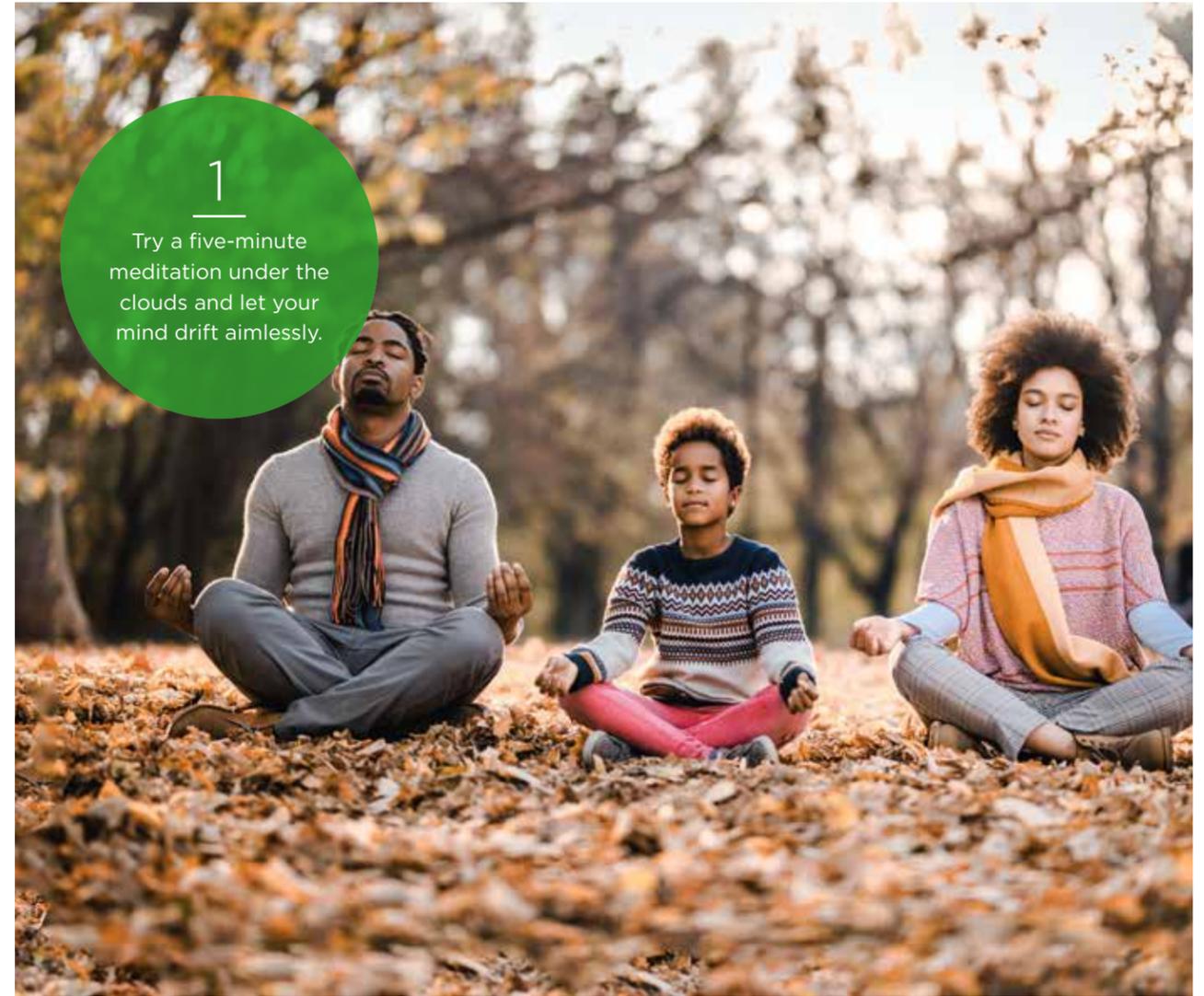
With a routine oral exam, your dentist can potentially detect signs of many diseases, including diabetes. It's important to maintain regular dental exams if you have diabetes. Your dental plan may allow for enhanced benefits, such as additional exams, cleanings or deep cleanings that help treat oral issues associated with the disease.

Diabetes can also harm your vision by causing damage to the small blood vessels in your retina. An eye exam can catch signs of diabetes early, before you suffer a change in vision.



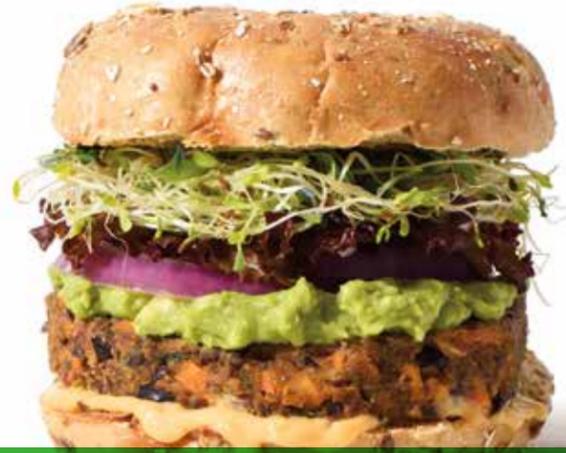
Although there is no cure for diabetes, it can be properly managed. Early detection is key. Tell your dentist, optometrist and physician if you are experiencing any symptoms of diabetes. Be sure to let your dentist and optometrist know if you have diabetes, if your blood sugar is off, what medicines you take and when you most recently took them. ■

Your fall smile list



1
Try a five-minute meditation under the clouds and let your mind drift aimlessly.

- 2 Turn your door into a silly monster using your imagination and supplies you have on hand.
- 3 Doorbell ditch your neighbors and leave sweet surprises on their porches.
- 4 Roast pumpkin seeds with a bit of olive oil for a crunchy snack.
- 5 Rake your lawn, then jump in the pile of leaves for kidlike fun.
- 6 Start a journal and write down everything you're thankful for.
- 7 Embrace Meatless Monday and try a flavorful sweet potato burger. Check out the recipe on page 5.
- 8 Share the pumpkin spice love with a batch of creamy pumpkin mousse. Learn how easy it is to make on page 10.
- 9 Get crafty with fall leaves and create an autumn wreath.
- 10 Support your favorite local business and order a healthy meal to enjoy at home. ■



More meatless alternatives to beef and chicken

The next time you're looking at a menu, you may notice some plant-based options. While veggie burgers have been around just as long as traditional hamburgers, the selection of meatless burgers that taste like the real thing have recently started expanding. Today, they're even offered at some popular fast-food restaurants.

Some meatless burgers are heavily processed, meaning they may have a lot of extra salt and other preservatives that regular beef patties wouldn't have. They're also high in saturated fat, which has been linked to heart disease and gum disease. Lower-fat options include burgers made from black beans.

Meatless burgers provide key nutrients:

- They usually contain soy, peas and beans, giving them as much **protein** as traditional beef burgers. Foods rich in protein are a good source of **phosphorus**, which helps protect your tooth enamel.
- Eating beans provides your body with **iron** to keep your gums and tongue healthy, and **zinc** to help control plaque.
- Plant-based burgers also contain **vitamin B12**, which is important for the health of your teeth and bones.

Burgers may not be the only plant-based foods you'll find on the menu. Nuggets and tenders made from plants instead of chicken are becoming available at grocery stores and some fast-food chains. But these can also be high in preservatives, salt and fat. So if you decide to try meatless nuggets, choose ones that have beans or legumes as the main ingredient. And pick grilled over breaded strips to avoid cavity-causing carbs.

Overall, choosing not to eat meat and other animal products could improve your energy levels and lower your cholesterol. But there are some potential drawbacks. For example, a lack of calcium can increase your risk of gum disease and tooth decay. So if you choose to go meatless, make sure you're still getting enough calcium and vitamin D from other foods such as broccoli, leafy greens, soybeans, cheese and milk.

Our verdict: The growing availability of meatless burgers and nuggets offers more choices. But be aware that some plant-based options are healthier than others. To make your own meatless burger with wholesome ingredients, see our recipe for sweet potato burgers on page 5. ■



Your guide to open enrollment

Taking care of your health — and the health of your family — is so important. A key step in that process is choosing the kind of benefits coverage you'll need over the next 12 months.

Open enrollment is the time of year when you sign up for health benefits, including medical, dental and vision coverage. This usually comes 30 to 60 days before your new plans take effect. Open enrollment allows you to add, change or cancel coverage for the next 12-month period. You can also make changes to your benefits following a qualifying life event such as a marriage, divorce, birth or adoption, a move or change of job.

If you receive benefits through your job, your employer will let you know when open enrollment is approaching and share options with you. While open enrollment occurs in many workplaces, it is also used for Medicare and for those who get health insurance through the Affordable Care Act.

Preventive care is a key benefit of choosing to have dental coverage. While brushing and flossing daily is important, visiting the dentist regularly should also be a priority. Your dentist can help keep your oral health in shape and identify any problems early.

Routine checkups are covered 100% by most Delta Dental plans and can help identify problems in your mouth and body. Having dental coverage and making sure you visit the dentist regularly will save you money in the long run. That's because it can help prevent problems that are more urgent, complex and costly to fix.

Nearly all Americans (92%) believe their oral health is important to their overall health. Research proves this crucial connection. Numerous studies show a connection between gum disease and many other diseases and conditions, including heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Read more about how dental and vision exams can help detect diabetes on pages 12-14.

This is a great time to learn more about the benefits available to you. Be sure to:



Make the choice to have coverage.
This can protect your pocketbook from higher expenses you may face without it.



Do your homework and ask questions.
The information will help you make the best choices for yourself and your family.



Protect your oral and overall health.
Signing up for both health and dental coverage will help keep you healthy.

Plan for a healthy year ahead. Choosing to have dental coverage, either through your employer or with an individual plan, can help you maintain a healthy smile. ■

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reasons for nightmares about your teeth



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Do you ever wake up in the middle of the night, startled by a dream that your teeth are falling out or rotting? Nearly 2 in 5 people say they've had this dream.¹ It's so common, it's even been featured in movies such as Disney's "Inside Out." But what does this dream mean? Let's look at five possible explanations.

1

Worrying more than usual can cause nightmares. In fact, feeling a lot of stress, fear and anxiety can disrupt your daily life both while you're sleeping and when you're awake. See page 4 for advice on how to manage stress and protect your oral and overall health.



2

Grinding your teeth can lead to dreams about your teeth falling out. Teeth grinding, called bruxism, is also linked to stress. Reducing your intake of caffeine and alcohol, especially before bed, can help you stop grinding your teeth while you sleep. Your dentist may also suggest wearing a mouth guard at night to protect your teeth from further damage.



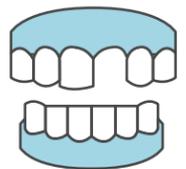
3

Experiencing major life changes such as a new baby, graduation or moving somewhere new can spur dreams about losing your teeth. Develop a routine to help yourself better adjust to the new situation. Just don't forget to continue brushing and flossing as part of that new routine.



4

Losing baby teeth may cause children to dream about it. Reassure your kids that these changes are natural. Help them prepare for a visit from the Tooth Fairy and use this as an opportunity to teach about the importance of good oral health habits.



5

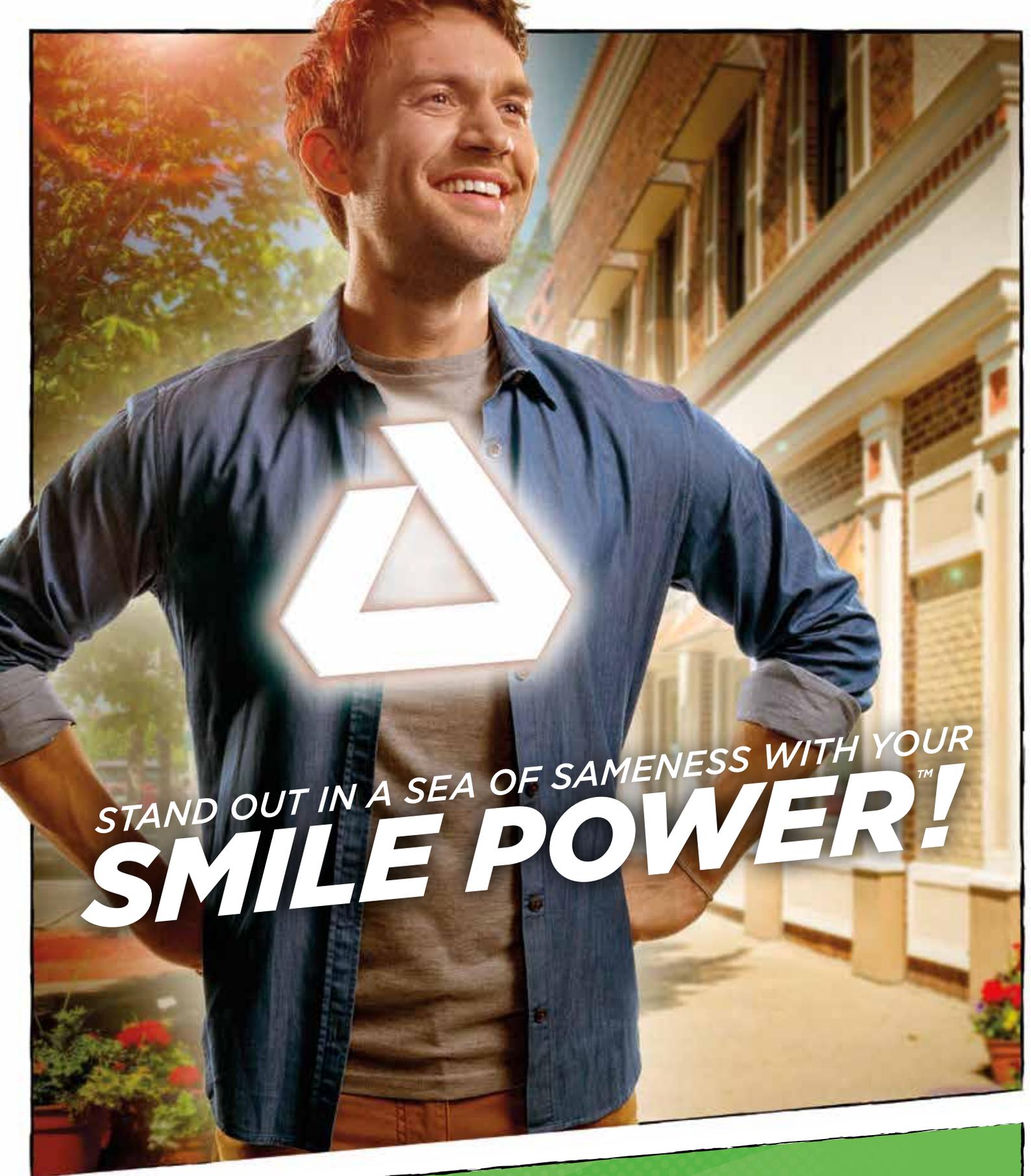
Falling behind on self-care can show up in your dreams. Use these frightful dreams as motivation to develop healthier habits, including getting enough sleep, maintaining a well-balanced diet, drinking plenty of water and exercising regularly.



Research has shown a connection between dreams and reality. Study participants who had a dream about their teeth falling out or rotting felt some irritation in their teeth, gums or jaw when they woke up. Managing your stress levels and maintaining good oral and overall health routines can help reduce the frequency of these dreams. ■

¹American Psychological Association

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