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Make your own kind of

❄️ FUN ❄️

THIS WINTER

Give your health a
boost with soup

It's easy to see why a
smile stands out

How can I get my kids
to brush and floss?

in this issue of
grin!

WELLNESS + NUTRITION



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Give your health a boost with soup

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Visit the *Grin!* website for more ways to keep your smile healthy.



View web-exclusive content, videos and more!

FUN + INSPIRATION



Surprise! It's easy to spark smiles on birthdays.

Whether celebrating in person or from a distance, birthdays can be special with these thoughtful gestures and tasty treats. Be sure to try our healthier cupcake recipe. You'll never taste the difference!

WELLNESS + NUTRITION



Keep your smile healthy during cold and flu season.

The medicines and beverages you use to help treat a cold or flu could leave your teeth vulnerable to cavities. Learn how to fight a cold or flu this winter while also protecting your smile.

Access the digital version anytime, anywhere at grinmag.com.

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On topic with Dr. Dill: tips for a healthier home

Germs are everywhere. They live in every part of our bodies and are a natural and often helpful part of our environment. In our homes, millions of germs can be found on everyday items such as toothbrushes, towels and handles — most often in the kitchen and bathroom.

While most germs are harmless, others that enter your mouth can lead to tooth decay, gum disease and other problems. Germs that can cause disease are called pathogens. You may also develop overall health issues as certain pathogens make their way into your bloodstream. So how do you protect yourself?

- 1 **Rinse your toothbrush before and after each use** to reduce the amount of germs on it. Don't let the head of your brush touch other items, like someone else's toothbrush.
- 2 **Avoid sharing used toothbrushes, straws, utensils and cups.** These items gather germs when they touch our mouths. Sharing allows germs to travel from one mouth to another, potentially causing tooth decay.
- 3 **Clean and disinfect items you touch frequently,** including your toothbrush handle and holder, shower curtains, switches, faucets, doorknobs, phones and keyboards. Germs from these items can make their way into your body when you touch your face.
- 4 **Clean your mouth guard, clear aligner, retainer or dentures daily** to remove food and bacteria. This will help prevent oral health problems, including gum disease, infection, mouth sores and bad breath. Also, store them in a protective case.
- 5 **Don't clean a baby's pacifier with your mouth,** which could spread germs to the child. It's better to rinse the pacifier with water instead.
- 6 **Wash used towels at least once a week,** and make sure they dry between uses. Towels used after brushing your teeth and washing your face are a great hiding spot for all kinds of germs.

By practicing good hygiene at home, you'll keep bad germs at bay and better protect your family's health. ■



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: broccoli and red pepper frittata

If you're craving something rich and satisfying, this frittata recipe is perfect for brunch or any meal! It's filled with flavorful broccoli, spinach and red bell peppers that can boost your immunity and keep your smile healthy.

Ingredients:

8 eggs
 ¼ cup milk
 16 ounces sour cream
 ½ cup cheddar cheese, grated
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon pepper
 2 tablespoons salted butter
 1 cup frozen broccoli
 1 cup spinach
 ½ cup red bell pepper, sliced

Directions:

- ① Heat oven to 350 F.
- ② Beat eggs and milk in a large mixing bowl until combined. Stir in sour cream, cheddar cheese, salt and pepper.
- ③ Melt butter in a cast-iron skillet over medium heat.
- ④ Cook broccoli, spinach and red bell pepper in skillet until just soft. Remove from heat and pour egg mixture over vegetables in skillet.
- ⑤ Place skillet in oven. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes until egg is solid in the middle.
- ⑥ Remove from oven and let cool.
- ⑦ Slice and enjoy! ■



History of oral health: the origins of fruitcake

The fruitcake — a sweet mixture of fruits, nuts, bread and alcohol — has stood the test of time. Whether taking the form of “stollen” in Germany, “panettone” in Italy or “black cake” in Jamaica, the fruitcake has signaled special occasions across the globe.



100 A.D. A cake called “satura” was made during the Roman Empire by mixing stale bread with pine nuts, pomegranate seeds and raisins, then soaking it in barley mash and an alcoholic beverage brewed from honey. Roman soldiers snacked on these cakes because they preserved well.

1500s Meat was used as an ingredient in fruitcake along with wine, sherry, fruit juice, sugar and preserved fruits. Additional fruits and nuts eventually replaced the meat. The meatless version became known as “plum cake.”

1700s Fruitcakes were so rich, they were considered sinful and were outlawed in Europe in the early 18th century. Restrictions eased later in the century.

1800s These cakes became a popular part of English teatime. They were also served at the weddings of British royals including Queen Victoria, Princess Diana and Prince William.

1900s The fruitcake reached new heights in 1969, when one traveled to space on Apollo 11. It was never eaten, though, and remains on display at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

Fruitcake is filled with sugar, starch and dried fruits that can stick to your teeth and increase your risk of tooth decay. When indulging in holiday treats, try to:

- **Eat sweets with a healthy meal** to help neutralize sugar in your mouth.
- **Enjoy them in moderation.** Keeping your sugar intake to less than 10% of your daily calories can lower your risk of tooth decay.¹
- **When possible, choose plain chocolate over hard or chewy treats** that can stick to your teeth and increase your chances of cavities.
- **Drink water, brush your teeth or chew sugar-free gum** to wash away sugar after eating sweets. ■

¹World Health Organization



Readers ask, we answer

Charlotte asks:
“How can I get my kids to brush and floss?”

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, Charlotte! Getting kids to brush and floss doesn't have to feel like pulling teeth. Here are some ways to make the experience positive, creative and fun — building the foundation for a lifetime of healthy smiles.

0-1
YEAR OLD

Introduce words such as “dentist” and “toothbrush” to your child’s vocabulary to get an early start on their dental knowledge. Take your child to the dentist by age 1 or within six months of the first tooth. Your dentist and hygienist can provide tips for developing a good oral health routine.

2-4
YEARS OLD

Let your children pick their own toothbrush and toothpaste. There are plenty of fun colors, characters and flavors to choose from! Then, crank up the music while you help them brush. Be sure to model good behavior by showing your children how you brush and floss, and letting them practice on a doll or other toy.

5-7
YEARS OLD

Use a calendar and stickers to keep track of your child’s brushing and flossing. Provide plenty of praise. Then, offer rewards such as a new toy, favorite game or later bedtime to celebrate milestones. There are also many great books about good oral health, the Tooth Fairy and visiting the dentist.

8-11
YEARS OLD

Find a virtual timer your kids will enjoy. Or buy an old-school timer that can sit in the bathroom to help your kids brush for two full minutes. Need more ideas? Check out grinforkids.com for fun activities that teach kids about oral health, including science experiments.

12+
YEARS OLD

Embrace your child’s love of technology by incorporating it into their oral health routine with an electric toothbrush or water flosser. Then, encourage your preteens and teens to keep brushing and flossing regularly, so they have smiles they are proud of!



Start habits early to get your family into the routine of brushing twice a day and flossing daily. The more fun you can make it, the better chance they'll stick with it. ■

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THIS WINTER



Looking for enjoyable indoor activities? Brighten your home for the holidays with easy DIY projects made from supplies you may already have on hand. Here are some creative crafts the whole family will want to join in on, plus tips to keep your oral health in mind as you DIY.



Paper snowflakes

Create a festive flurry in minutes with just paper and scissors.



SUPPLIES:

Paper
Scissors

DIRECTIONS:

1. Fold a square piece of paper in half diagonally to create a triangle.
2. Fold paper in half again so pointed corners meet.
3. Fold paper in half again.
4. Cut folded paper using different shapes to make your own unique patterns.
5. Unfold. Each snowflake is one-of-a-kind!



HEALTHY SMILE TIP:

Crafting has been shown to reduce stress and improve your mood. Stress can have an effect on your health, including oral health problems like mouth sores and teeth grinding.



Popcorn and cranberry garland

This colorful creation will really pop when you add it to your tree, mantel or door.



SUPPLIES:

Cranberries
Popcorn
String
Needle
Scissors

DIRECTIONS:

1. Wash cranberries and select the firm ones.
2. Make popcorn.
3. Thread needle and tie a knot at one end of string. (Don't hold the needle with your teeth!)
4. Thread a cranberry and push to the end of the string.
5. Add popped popcorn and push it down to the cranberry.
6. Keep adding cranberries and popcorn.
7. Tie a knot at the end when you've reached the length you need.



HEALTHY SMILE TIP:

It's OK to sneak some pieces of popcorn. Just avoid unpopped kernels that can damage your teeth and popcorn hulls that can get stuck under your gums. Brushing and flossing can get rid of any popcorn left in your mouth.



Stovetop potpourri

Make your home warm and cozy with this easy-to-make potpourri that combines an attractive look with an enticing aroma.



SUPPLIES:

- 1 cup fresh cranberries
- 2 sliced oranges
- 1 tablespoon whole cloves
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 3 to 4 small pieces of fresh pine
- Water

DIRECTIONS:

1. Fill a large pot with ingredients and top with water until ingredients are covered.
2. Bring to a simmer and continue adding water as it evaporates.



HEALTHY SMILE TIP:

Fresh cranberries help prevent cavity-causing bacteria from sticking to your teeth, so enjoy some of these tart berries as a snack.



Homemade gingerbread house

You can also make your home look and smell great with this recipe for a cute but sturdy gingerbread house.



SUPPLIES:

- 4½ cups flour
- 3 teaspoons ground ginger
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup vegetable shortening
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup molasses
- Choice of decorating supplies

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 325 F and line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Sift together flour, spices, baking soda, salt and pepper in a large bowl.
3. Melt shortening over medium-high heat for about 4 minutes.
4. Whisk sugar and molasses in shortening until well combined.
5. Remove from heat and stir in flour mixture until just combined.
6. Put dough onto large piece of plastic wrap. Cover and let cool in refrigerator for 10 to 15 minutes.
7. Roll dough to a ⅜-inch thickness and cut into desired shapes. Place on baking sheets.
8. Bake 30 minutes, rotating sheets halfway through.
9. Cool before decorating with frosting, gumdrops, candy canes, peppermints and anything else you like.



HEALTHY SMILE TIP:

Decorations like gumdrops and candy canes make your gingerbread house look great. But they're not so great for your smile! Resist the urge to munch on these sugary cavity-causers. ■



The power of a smile: It's easy to see why a smile stands out

When you notice someone beaming from ear to ear, their smile is easy to detect. But did you realize that smiles can be spotted when you can't see them? Even wearing a face mask can't hide the power of a smile. Here are a few facts about how easy it is to identify this positive emotional gesture and reasons why you might want to smile more this season.

They're extraordinarily easy to spot.

A smile is easily the most noticeable expression. In fact, people can recognize smiles from one end of a football field to another — that's 300 feet away!

You don't have to see a smile to identify it.

Don't worry if you're bundled up or wearing a mask. People know you're smiling even if your mouth and nose are covered. When you smile, your eyes tend to give away your feelings as they may narrow and crinkle, while laugh lines also appear.

Your smile can be detected in your voice.

It's not just nonverbal cues that give away a smile. You can also hear when someone is smiling. The changes in the shape of a smiling mouth make your voice sound brighter. Keep this in mind as you stay in touch with friends and family over the phone.

Two great reasons to keep smiling

- 1 **It's a free way to share good feelings.**
Smiling not only improves your mood, but it also helps others feel better because they will likely smile along with you. The instinct to mimic another person's behavior is so strong that people will imitate your smile even when they can't see your mouth.
- 2 **Smiling helps your immune system.**
When you smile, you reduce stress because you are more relaxed. Stress has been proven to cause illness. So add smiling to your list of ways to help prevent colds and flu this winter. ■

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GIVE YOUR HEALTH a boost with soup

Mmmm, there's nothing more comforting than a warm bowl of soup when it's chilly outside. Soups are not only delicious and filling, but many have ingredients that can improve your immunity during cold and flu season. Try making these four soups at home this winter.

Chicken vegetable soup

Look no further than soothing chicken soup if you aren't feeling well. A twist on the traditional version, this recipe replaces noodles with cauliflower rice for a low-carb, mouth-friendly option.

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 medium onion, chopped
5 cloves garlic, smashed
2 inches fresh ginger, thickly sliced
10 ounces frozen cauliflower rice
¾ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
1 medium carrot, peeled and sliced
1 stalk celery, thinly sliced
½ cup broccoli florets
6 cups chicken broth
2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
Salt and pepper, to taste
Freshly chopped parsley

Directions:

1. Heat vegetable oil in a large pot over medium heat.
2. Add onion, garlic and ginger. Cook 3 minutes.
3. Add cauliflower rice, red pepper flakes, carrots, celery, broccoli and chicken broth.
4. Increase heat to medium high and bring soup to a boil.
5. Combine chicken breasts with soup, cooking about 15 minutes until chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165 F.
6. Remove chicken from pot and set aside. Cool, then shred.
7. Reduce heat to a simmer and continue to cook soup for 3 to 5 more minutes, until vegetables are tender.
8. Remove ginger from pot. Add shredded chicken back to soup.
9. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
10. Garnish with parsley before serving.

Cauliflower

is rich in antioxidants that prevent infections and maintain healthy teeth and gums.

Chicken breasts

contain carnosine, a protein-building block that can help your body fight inflammation and keep you from getting sick.

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Creamy mushroom soup

This thick, creamy soup is so versatile, you can serve it as an appetizer or light lunch. As an added benefit, it's low in carbs and gluten free.

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon olive oil
½ large onion, diced
20 ounces mushrooms, sliced
6 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups chicken broth
1 cup heavy cream
1 cup unsweetened almond or coconut milk
¾ teaspoon sea salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper

Directions:

1. Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat.
2. Add onions and mushrooms and sauté for 10 to 15 minutes, until lightly brown.
3. Add minced garlic and sauté for another minute.
4. Mix in remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Use a blender to purée the soup until smooth.

Garlic

contains antioxidants that can boost your immune system, helping protect your mouth and body from bacteria and viruses.

Mushrooms

are a great source of zinc, riboflavin, niacin and vitamin D, all of which can help your body fight infection and disease.

Eggs

are full of protein and zinc, two key ingredients for a healthy immune system.

Egg drop soup

This Chinese comfort food fuses the delicious flavors of egg and chicken broth. Jazz it up with some red pepper flakes if you like yours spicy.

Ingredients:

4 cups chicken broth
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 tablespoon soy sauce
2 eggs, beaten
Salt and pepper, to taste
Freshly chopped parsley

Directions:

1. Combine chicken broth, ground ginger and soy sauce in a saucepan. Bring to a simmer.
2. Stir the soup in one direction and slowly add in beaten eggs.
3. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Garnish with parsley before serving.

Ginger

is packed with antioxidants that help ward off germs and diseases to keep your mouth and whole body healthy.

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Continued from page 13



Onions
contain quercetin,
an antioxidant that
fights viruses and
inflammation.

Black beans
are packed with
protein, fiber, calcium
and phosphorus that
can strengthen your
teeth and bones.

Spicy black bean soup

This thick, hearty soup is chock-full of veggies and spices — a great choice for anyone looking for a meatless meal. The flavors blend for a soup that's fresh, flavorful and full of flair.

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 medium red onions, chopped
3 stalks celery, finely chopped
6 cloves garlic, pressed or minced
4½ teaspoons ground cumin
½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
60 ounces black beans, rinsed and drained
4 cups vegetable broth
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
2 tablespoons lime juice
Sea salt and pepper, to taste
Toppings of your choice

Directions:

1. Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat.
2. Add onions, celery and a sprinkle of salt. Cook 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally until vegetables are soft.
3. Stir in garlic, cumin and red pepper flakes. Cook about 30 seconds until fragrant.
4. Increase heat to medium high. Pour in beans and broth.
5. Simmer for 30 minutes until broth is flavorful and beans are tender. Reduce heat as necessary.
6. Transfer 4 cups of the soup to a blender and purée until smooth. Then, pour purée back into the pot.
7. Stir in cilantro and lime juice. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
8. Top with optional garnishes such as sliced avocado, red onion, sour cream or shredded cheddar cheese.

As an added bonus, soup freezes well! Make batches of these soups in advance and stick them in the freezer, where they will last for up to a month. When you are ready to enjoy your soup, thaw it overnight in the fridge, then reheat it in the microwave or on the stove. ■

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Your winter smile list



1

Add a soup with
immune-boosting
ingredients to your menu.
See pages 12-14 for
flavorful recipes to try.

- 2 Relax in a warm bath with some aromatherapy bath salts.
- 3 Try an online workout to get your heart pumping.
- 4 Send a care package to a family member or friend who lives out of state.
- 5 Discover a new podcast.
- 6 Gather gently used coats, hats and gloves to donate.
- 7 Begin each morning with an entry in a gratitude journal. Find other ways to start your day right on pages 18-19.
- 8 Make a New Year's bucket list, starting with one adventure you'd like to experience.
- 9 Have a holiday movie night with mouth-friendly snacks like apples, cheese or nuts.
- 10 String a garland of popcorn and cranberries to decorate for winter. Try our other fun crafts on pages 8-10. ■



Supplements that could shorten your illness

NEWS + RESEARCH

Zinc and vitamin C have become increasingly popular remedies to help prevent and treat the common cold. Some studies show these supplements can reduce the length of an illness.

Both supplements are available in several forms, including lozenges, syrups, nasal sprays, powders and tablets. But if you're already getting enough of these immune-boosting nutrients in your diet, taking more may not help. Consider the potential benefits and side effects before taking supplements this cold season.

Oral health benefits

- **Vitamin C** is an important nutrient for healing and gum health. Your body also needs it to form the tissues that support your teeth.
- **Zinc** helps control plaque so your body can better fight cavities and gum disease.

Potential side effects

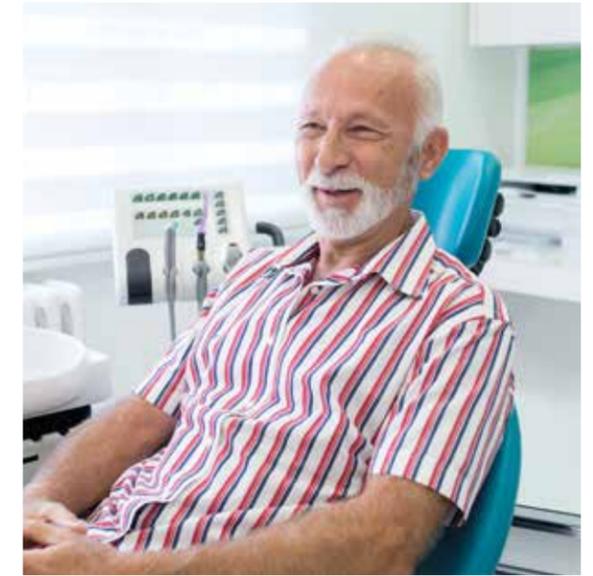
- **Vitamin C** taken in quantities of 2,000 milligrams a day or more can cause nausea, diarrhea and abdominal pain.
- **Zinc** can irritate your mouth and stomach. Potential side effects include nausea, a bad taste in your mouth and loss of smell.
- **Chewable tablets or gummies** can leave behind sugar that bacteria can turn into acid, weakening your enamel and increasing your risk of cavities.

If possible, it's better to get your daily vitamins and minerals from food, which also provides other important nutrients for your oral and overall health. Good sources of zinc include red meat, chicken, whole grains, beans and nuts. Vitamin C can be found in berries, potatoes, peppers, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, broccoli and spinach. For more ways to get immune-boosting nutrients into your diet, [try our soup recipes on pages 12-14.](#)

Our verdict: There's potential for zinc and vitamin C supplements to shorten the length of a cold. However, nothing beats taking care of yourself with a balanced diet, exercise and plenty of sleep each night. **For tips on how to protect yourself from getting sick by preventing the spread of germs, see page 4.** ■

Extra dental care may help with these medical conditions

Taking good care of your teeth, gums and mouth helps ensure the health of your whole body. That's because research shows a connection between your oral and overall health.



Some medical conditions put you at greater risk for having oral health problems. These include:

- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Kidney failure
- HIV
- Suppressed immune system
- Pregnancy

If you have any of these conditions, a history of being susceptible to such conditions or have been diagnosed with gum disease, Delta Dental's enhanced benefits could help you take better care of both your mouth and body.

Enhanced benefits provide additional oral health care such as extra cleanings, exams and fluoride treatments. The additional dental care could help you better manage your medical conditions.

NEWS + RESEARCH

If you qualify for enhanced benefits, the extra care could potentially:



Reduce tooth loss if you are susceptible to gum disease.



Better control your glucose levels if you have diabetes.



Decrease your risk of cavities, which are more common if you're undergoing chemotherapy and radiation.



Control periodontal (gum) disease, which has been linked with inflammation of the arteries, heart disease and stroke.



Prevent gum problems that are more likely if you are diabetic or pregnant.



Lessen bacteria buildup in your mouth and lower the chance of infections that can be especially harmful for those with kidney disease, HIV or organ failure.

Employers can choose to offer dental plans with enhanced benefits. To find out if it's available with your plan and if you are eligible, check with your employer, dentist and dental benefits company.

Enhanced benefits are available through some Delta Dental plans for little or no increase in your premium. That extra care could protect not only your mouth, but your whole body. ■

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5

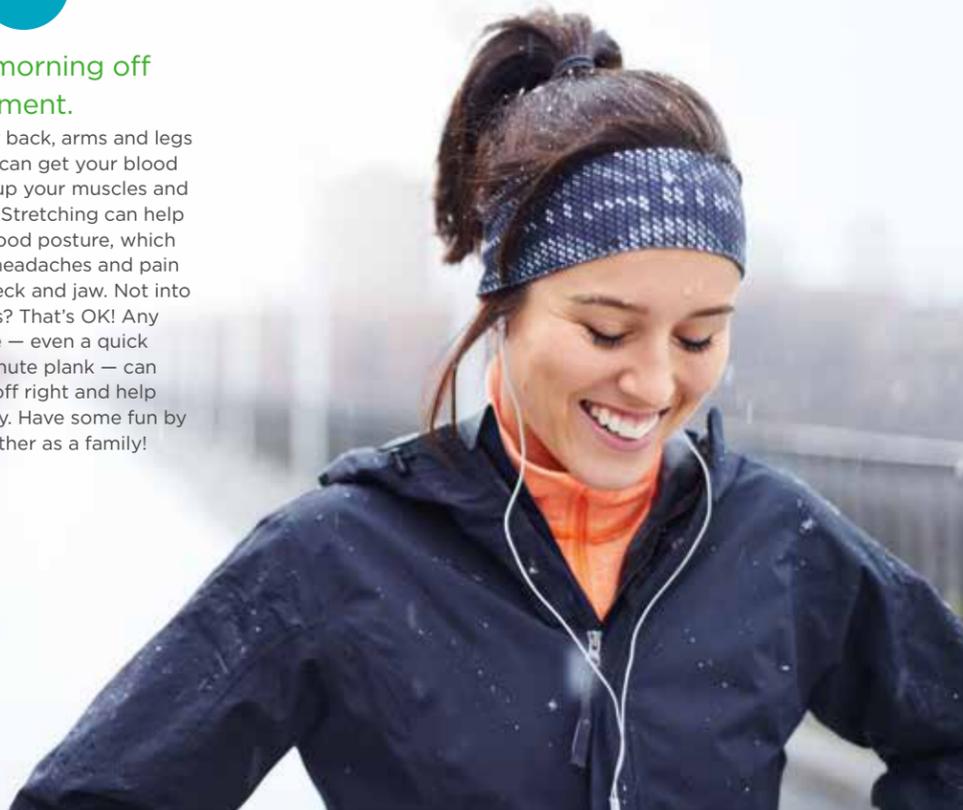
ways to revitalize your morning routine

The first two hours of each morning can get you on the right path for a productive day.¹ Making use of this time with a set routine can energize you, reduce stress and lead to better health. Here are five ideas to make this happen.

1

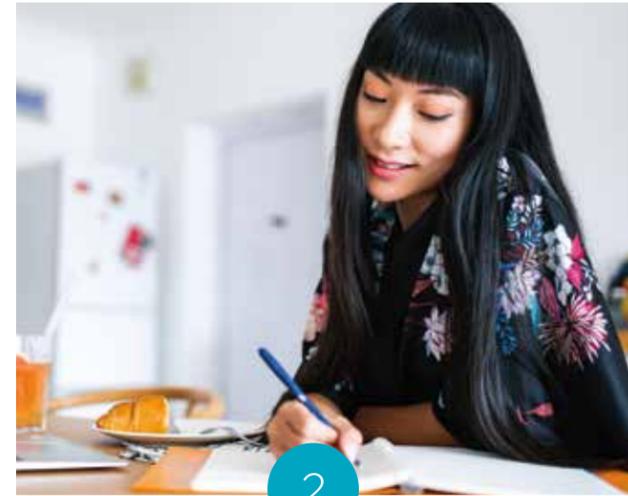
Kick your morning off with movement.

Stretching your back, arms and legs in the morning can get your blood flowing, warm up your muscles and relieve tension. Stretching can help you maintain good posture, which may decrease headaches and pain in your back, neck and jaw. Not into 5 a.m. workouts? That's OK! Any kind of exercise — even a quick walk or two-minute plank — can start your day off right and help you stay healthy. Have some fun by doing this together as a family!



¹Psychology Today

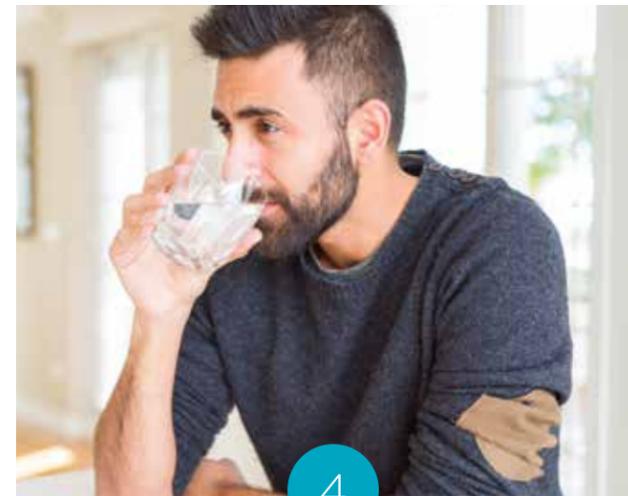
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2

Start your day with self-care.

Taking a little time for yourself — by meditating for five minutes, reading, listening to something uplifting or writing in a journal — can reduce stress and help your mental and physical health. Your morning self-care should also include brushing your teeth mindfully for two minutes to prevent tooth decay and bad breath. [See page 7 for tips on how to make brushing fun for your kids.](#) And don't forget to make your bed. This simple task declutters your space and mind. It also starts your day with a feeling of accomplishment.



4

Hydrate, and then hydrate some more!

Starting your day with a big glass of water will help get you closer to your daily goal of eight, 8-ounce glasses of water each day.³ Drinking water (preferably fluoridated!) is one of the best things you can do for your oral and overall health. It washes away food stuck in your teeth, replenishes saliva and helps prevent cavities. It can also improve your mood!

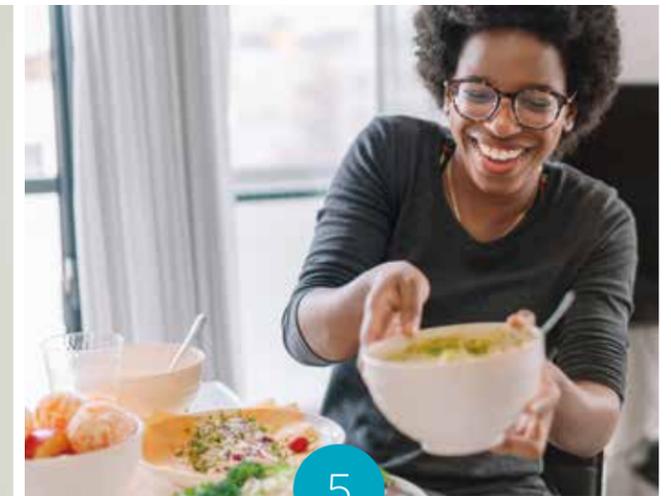
²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
³Mayo Clinic



3

Prep for success the night before.

Doing some tasks ahead of time will allow you to hit the ground running in the morning and squeeze in extra time for yourself. This can help reduce stress and related problems such as gum disease, canker sores and teeth grinding. Your nightly tasks could include filling up your water bottle, preparing a healthy lunch and snacks, choosing the next day's outfit and creating a to-do list. And be sure to get to bed on time. School-age children should get nine to 12 hours of sleep, while adults should get at least seven hours.²



5

Fuel your body with a healthy breakfast.

Eating healthy foods in the morning can give you energy, kick-start your metabolism and nourish your brain. Foods such as oats, milk, eggs, cheese, yogurt and spinach are packed with nutrients, including calcium and manganese — making them great choices for your oral and overall health. Prepping for a busy week ahead? [The broccoli and red pepper frittata on page 5 can be made in advance and warmed up for a convenient meal the whole family will love!](#) ■



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