# Grin!



### in this issue of

# grin!

WELLNESS + NUTRITION



Pack in more fun for your next outdoor meal

Eating outside can be even more enjoyable when you pack the right things. Check out some suggestions for having a healthy meal outdoors.

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NEWS + RESEARCH

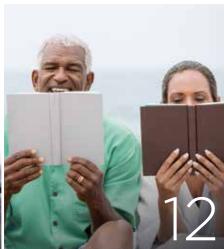


# Essential oils: healing or hazardous?

Essential oils are trendy for treating a surprising range of health issues. Can they help improve your oral health? We weigh the pros and cons.

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### FUN + INSPIRATION



# Keep this in mind to stay sharp

Be on top of your game by challenging your brain. No matter your age, try these methods for maintaining a healthy mind.

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



View web-exclusive content, videos and more!

NEWS + RESEARCH



Jaw issues can be a real pain in the neck

When it comes to pain, there's a strong connection between your neck and jaw. See why and learn some simple ways you may be able to find relief.

WELLNESS + NUTRITION



The oral health pros and cons of ice cream

There's good news and bad news when it comes to ice cream and oral health. Get the scoop on how to occasionally enjoy ice cream and still maintain a healthy smile.

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

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# On topic with Dr. Dill: a healthy smile may help you breathe easier

Nearly all Americans know that poor oral health can have negative effects on their overall well-being. In fact, gum disease has been linked to heart disease, diabetes and Alzheimer's disease.

Oral health can also play a role with lung problems. That's because billions of mostly harmless microbes — bacteria, viruses and fungi — linger in your mouth and can travel to your lungs as you breathe. Some of these organisms can cause pneumonia and other respiratory diseases.

The problem often starts with poor dental habits that can cause your saliva to have significantly more bacteria. As bacteria, plaque and tartar build up along and below your gumline, your gums may become irritated, inflamed and infected — all signs of gum disease. Almost half of all adults 30 and older show signs of gum disease.<sup>2</sup>

Research shows gum disease can increase the likelihood of developing respiratory issues such as bronchitis or pneumonia, especially for those who are elderly, live in a nursing home or have other health conditions. One study showed 1 in 10 deaths from pneumonia among nursing home residents could have been prevented with better dental hygiene.3

Severe respiratory problems are a hallmark of COVID-19 with about 1 in 5 COVID-19 patients developing these complications.<sup>4</sup> Researchers are studying whether people with gum disease may be at greater risk of a more severe respiratory outcome.

Good oral health care can help protect your overall health — and may also prevent or reduce the severity of lung problems. So breathe easy and follow some simple steps for a healthy mouth.



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.

### 6 steps for good oral health





Floss daily to remove plaque and any food stuck between teeth.



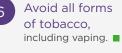
Visit your dentist regularly for preventive care. Check with your dental office about steps taken to maintain safety during the pandemic.





Maintain a healthy diet, including fruits, vegetables, dairy, lean proteins and lots of water.







12020 Delta Dental Adult's Oral Health & Well-Being Survey <sup>2</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Journal of Dental Research

<sup>4</sup>California Dental Association

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# grin!

# Mouth-friendly recipe: banana-berry ice cream

Cool off with this refreshing banana-berry ice cream — a light alternative to traditional ice cream and one that is better for your smile! It's naturally sweet and packs a mouthful of flavor with just four simple ingredients: frozen bananas, berries, milk and vanilla extract. Think of the fun toppings you could add: blueberries, strawberries, raspberries — oh, my! Enjoy this creamy blend in a dish and forgo the sugary cone for an even healthier smile.

### Ingredients:

### 2 ripe bananas

- 1 cup frozen berries
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt
- Toppings of your choice

### Directions:

- (1) Peel and slice ripe bananas into large pieces. Place in a freezer-safe container and freeze for at least 2 hours.
- (2) Once banana slices are frozen, blend all ingredients in a food processor or blender until texture is similar to soft-serve ice cream.
- (3) Serve immediately or freeze for an additional 30 minutes for a firmer texture.
- (4) Top with a dollop of sugar-free whipped cream and additional berries





# Facts about your furry (and scaly) friends' teeth







Puppies develop, then lose, baby teeth.

Your vet can advise you on the safest teething toys for your pup.

Dogs usually get all of their adult teeth by the time they are

6 or 7 months old.



Talk to your veterinarian.

FIND OUT IF A PROFESSIONAL TEETH CLEANING

is a good option for your pet.

Bad breath is not normal for cats and dogs.

Mouth odors could be an early sign of painful dental problems, such as gingivitis and gum disease.

80% of dogs
AND
70% of cats

have signs of dental disease by age 3.1





Unlike our teeth, rabbits' and hamsters' incisors never stop growing.

Rabbits and hamsters must gnaw on wooden chew toys to wear down their growing teeth and keep them from chewing on their cages. Ferrets often break or chip their fangs by chewing on hard objects.

If a tooth is broken or chipped, take your ferret to the vet to prevent infection.

Ferrets have 40 teeth.

THAT'S 8 MORE THAN HUMANS!



Bearded dragons' teeth are fused to the bone and don't have roots.

Their teeth are easily damaged or lost and not replaced by new teeth.

They need hard foods, like crunchy veggies, to help prevent gum disease.

Pets can develop many of the same dental issues as humans. Make sure to have their teeth checked annually by a veterinarian and ask about the best methods of caring for your pet's teeth — including brushing their teeth. ■

<sup>1</sup>TuftsNow

# Readers ask, we answer

"Why do my gums bleed when I 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, Kathy! If you're seeing red, don't panic. It's not uncommon to notice a little blood when you brush or floss your teeth.



Here are some reasons gums may bleed:

- Not flossing regularly can result in bleeding when you do, but this should stop once your gums get used to your flossing routine.
- Not brushing or flossing thoroughly may cause you to miss the same areas repeatedly. Those areas can become inflamed and bleed when you do reach them. Brush for a full two minutes and thoroughly clean around every tooth.
- Brushing or flossing too vigorously can cause gums to bleed. Be gentle when you brush and floss.
- Using a toothbrush with firm bristles can also cause bleeding. Choose a soft toothbrush.
- Hormonal changes during menstruation and pregnancy increase the flow of blood to the gums.
   This can make them more sensitive and lead to inflammation and bleeding.
- Medicine such as aspirin thins your blood and reduces clotting. This can also cause your gums to bleed easier.
- Gum disease (gingivitis and periodontitis) can lead to inflamed, sensitive, swollen and tender gums that may bleed.



Here are some preventive measures:

- Maintain a balanced diet that includes vitamin C, which is essential for healthy gums. Get your daily dose from strawberries, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, potatoes and bell peppers.
- Eat leafy greens such as kale and spinach, which are rich in vitamin K. Not in the mood for a salad? Try these greens in your smoothie or soup.
- Floss daily. This will prevent plaque from building up between your teeth and reduce your risk of cavities and gum disease. Here's a little refresher on how it's done:
- (1) Start with 18 to 24 inches of floss.
- 2 Use your thumb and index finger to guide the floss between each tooth.
- 3 Hold the floss tightly around each tooth in a C shape, moving the floss up and down against the sides of each tooth.
- 4 Repeat with each tooth. Don't forget to floss behind the last back molar.

By brushing twice a day, flossing daily and maintaining a balanced diet, you can reduce the likelihood that you'll be seeing red. Talk with your dentist and physician if your gums continue to bleed.

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Good food. Sunny days. Fun times. How can it get better than that? You can make eating outside even more enjoyable with a little planning ahead. Whether you go to a local park or just your own yard, try these tips for a happier, healthier outdoor meal.

### Bring these essentials to enjoy the day outside -



A cooler with ice will help keep your food cold and prevent it from spoiling. Leaving your cooler in the shade can also keep it colder, longer.



A blanket or large towel is helpful if you choose to sit on the ground, rather than at a table.



is a healthier choice than sugary beverages such as lemonade or sweet tea.



Plates and utensils may be needed, depending on what foods and drinks are on your menu.





resealable containers. Avoid foods that can spoil, such as salads made with mayonnaise.



Sunscreen and lip balm with SPF 30+ will protect you from sunburn. Reapply frequently, including after you eat and drink.



Napkins, hand sanitizer and trash bags will help you stay clean, both during and after your meal. Having a trash bag on hand will allow you to leave nature as clean as you found it.

### Take these steps to make the best of your day

- (1) Walk to your destination instead of driving there if possible. This will help you get some exercise along the way.
- 2) Only take food out of the cooler when you're ready to eat. Perishable foods such as cold-cut meats or potato salad should only be left out for 1 to 2 hours at most.
- (3) Bring a reusable water bottle. This will help you stay hydrated and allow you to refill your bottle if there's a water station nearby. Filling your bottle with ice can help keep your drink cold even in the bright sunshine.
- (4) Drink water or chew sugar-free gum when the meal is over to help wash away any food, acids and bacteria left behind in your mouth.

Plan ahead so you can pack fresh, healthy foods. Check out the flavorful recipes on the next page to try something new.  $\rightarrow$ 

# Gouda turkey club sandwich

Continued from page 9

This hearty sandwich is filled with tender turkey, creamy Gouda cheese and a light saltiness of bacon that will make your mouth water and satisfy your hunger.



Turkey has plenty of protein and phosphorus to give you energy and help keep your teeth, bones and muscles healthy.

### **HEALTHY SMILE BENEFITS**

Multi-grain bread with whole grains can reduce your risk of heart disease. It's also less likely than white bread to stick to your teeth and cause cavities.

Lettuce is a good source of vitamins A, K and folate. It helps produce saliva to clean your mouth and keep your tooth enamel healthy.

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 pieces multi-grain bread
- 3-4 slices roasted turkey breast
- 2 strips cooked bacon
- 1 slice Gouda cheese
- 2 romaine lettuce leaves
- 2-3 pieces thinly sliced yellow bell pepper 1-2 pickle slices

### DIRECTIONS:

- 1. Place a slice of bread on a plate or cutting board.
- 2. Layer turkey on the bread, followed by all the toppings.
- 3. Top with the other slice of bread.
- 4. Cut in half and place in a resealable container.

# Broccoli salad For a side dish that's full

of flavor and nutrients, look no further than broccoli salad. This crunchy and delicious dish skips the mayo that could spoil outside.



Broccoli is a superfood that's rich in vitamin C and calcium — two nutrients that can decrease your risk of gum disease.

### **HEALTHY SMILE BENEFITS**

Cheese is packed with calcium for strong teeth and bones. Eating cheese can stimulate saliva to wash away acid and protect you from tooth decay.

Sunflower seeds contain vitamin E, an antioxidant that can lower inflammation and reduce the risk of high blood pressure and heart disease.

### INGREDIENTS:

For salad:

16 ounces finely chopped broccoli

- ½ cup sunflower seeds
- ½ cup finely chopped red onion
- ½ cup grated sharp cheddar cheese

For honey mustard dressing:

- ⅓ cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 medium clove garlic, pressed or minced
- 1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt

### DIRECTIONS:

- 1. Toss sunflower seeds in a skillet over medium heat. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring frequently.
- 2. Place toasted seeds in a large serving bowl. Add broccoli, onion and cheese.
- 3. In a separate small bowl, combine all dressing ingredients. Whisk until well-blended.
- 4. Pour dressing over salad and stir until broccoli is lightly coated.
- 5. Marinate at least 20 minutes or overnight in the refrigerator.
- 6. Place in resealable container and it's ready for your next outdoor meal.

# Take the test. How white can your teeth get?



### How often do you consume teeth-staining beverages and foods?

- (A) I rarely consume foods and drinks that could stain my teeth. (3 points)
- (B) I occasionally consume items that could stain my teeth. (2 points)
- (C) I consume teeth-staining foods or drinks daily. (1 point)

Coffee, tea, wine, soda and sports drinks can stain your teeth. Eating some colorful or acidic foods like blueberries or tomato sauce can also discolor teeth.

### Which best describes your daily oral health care routine?

- (A) I always brush at least twice a day, floss daily and visit my dentist regularly. (3 points)
- (B) I occasionally miss a brushing or flossing session or skip my dental appointment. (2 points)
- (C) I frequently skip brushing or flossing and haven't visited a dentist in more than a year. (1 point)

43% of American adults did not have their teeth professionally cleaned in 2020.1 Regular dental visits and daily brushing and flossing help remove plaque.

### What is your age?

- (A) 18-49 (3 points)
- (B) 50-74 (2 points)
- (C) 75+ (1 point)

As we age, the outer part of our teeth (enamel) gets thinner and the inner hard part of our teeth (dentin) gets darker, making teeth look more yellow or gray.

### Have you used tobacco?

- (A) I have avoided tobacco. (3 points)
- (B) I sometimes use(d) tobacco. (2 points)
- (C) I use tobacco regularly. (1 point)

Tobacco can stain your teeth, causing them to turn yellow, brown or even black.

### Have you had dental work on your front teeth?

- (A) I have no fillings or other major dental work on my front teeth. (3 points)
- (B) I have some dental work on my front teeth. (2 points)
- (C) I have had quite a bit of dental work on my front teeth. (1 point)

Teeth whitening does not work on fillings, crowns, veneers, bonding and bridges.

### Add up your points to see your potential for whiter teeth.

14-15 points The future could be bright

If you want whiter teeth, you might be a good candidate for successful tooth whitening.

10-13 points Outlook is a shade less clear

You might not achieve bright whites, but it may be possible to improve the shade of your smile.

5-9 points Chances could be dim

You may need to change your diet and avoid tobacco to significantly lighten your teeth or keep them

Keep your teeth healthy by brushing twice a day, flossing daily and seeing your dentist regularly. Teeth should be clean and polished — and teeth and gums should be healthy — before whitening. No matter how you scored, your dentist can help you determine if whitening is a good option for you. ■

<sup>1</sup>Delta Dental Plans Association: The State of America's Oral Health Report, 2020

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Challenging your brain every day helps it stay healthy. That's important for memory, concentration, problem solving and focus, now and later in life. While age is the main risk factor for a decline in cognition, it can begin as early as young adulthood — when people are in their 20s.1

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A decline in brain health is a growing public health issue nationwide.

### 1 in 9

### ADULTS HAVE EXPERIENCED MEMORY LOSS AND CONFUSION,

an early stage of Alzheimer's disease known as "subjective cognitive decline."2

### 16 million Americans

HAVE DIFFICULTY REMEMBERING, LEARNING NEW THINGS, CONCENTRATING AND MAKING DECISIONS.3

### Here are 6 things you can do to stay mentally sharp, no matter your age.



### Discover something new

Picking up a new skill may help improve your memory. Doing something new strengthens the connections between different

- · Cook or bake something using a new recipe out of your typical comfort zone.
- · Learn how to speak a new language.
- · Take up a new hobby such as knitting, drawing, painting or mastering jigsaw puzzles.
- · Try your hand at photography.



### Read as much as you can

A good book, magazine or news article can be like exercise for your brain. It keeps you mentally active, working your imagination and improving your memory.

- · Take a book outside to read in the shade, or wind down by reading before bed.
- · Make it a routine to read with your kids each day. Try picking up books about the Tooth Fairy so they can learn all about
- Read as a way to relax. Lowering your stress level can bring you peace of mind and reduce your chance of oral health problems such as teeth grinding and mouth sores.

# 3

### Exercise

Staying physically active will get your blood flowing, and keep your heart healthy and your mind sharp. When you move, your body releases chemicals that help keep you both physically and mentally healthy. If you're stepping away from home, don't forget to bring a bottle of water to stay hydrated while you move.

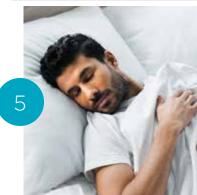
- Do something you enjoy for 30 minutes a day, whether it's walking, running, dancing, yoga or cycling.
- Find new ways to get extra steps throughout your day. Try
  getting up from your computer once an hour to move around
  for a guick break.



### Choose nutritious foods

Eat a balanced, low-fat diet that includes lots of fresh fruits and veggies, whole grains and lean proteins.

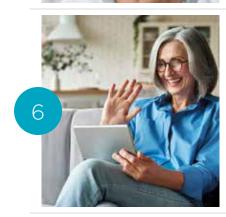
- Add more berries and leafy greens to your diet. They are among the best foods for your brain. For a tasty treat that's full of brain fuel, try our yummy banana-berry ice cream on page 5.
- Consume less red meat and fewer processed foods that have more saturated fat and can increase health risks, including a decline in memory.
- Try dark chocolate when you're craving something sweet.
   Studies show cocoa beans help improve memory and the ability to process information. Because plain chocolate melts in your mouth quicker than hard candies or gummies, it's less likely to cause cavities.



### Get plenty of rest

Going to bed on time helps your brain and whole body recharge.

- Make sure you're sleeping about 7 to 9 hours each night, and your school-age children are getting between 8 and 11 hours of rest.
- Give yourself this downtime to help your brain process the memories of the day.
- Take a moment to meditate during the day. This can slow your breathing, calm your brain and make you feel less stressed.

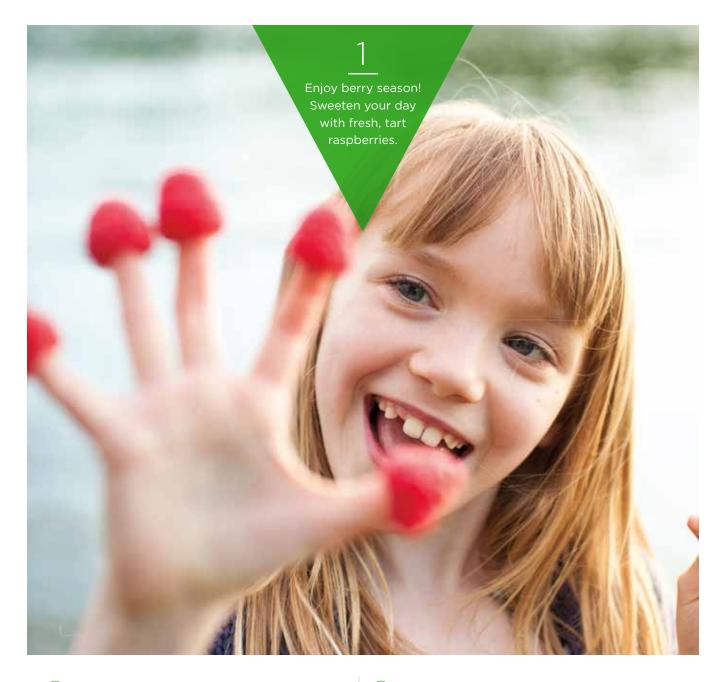


### Stay socially connected

Your relationships are also key to keeping your brain healthy and slowing down the pace that your memory dwindles.

- Spend time with friends and family to nourish your brain with friendship, love, empathy, kindness and compassion.
- Take care of your physical, mental and emotional well-being by nurturing connections with loved ones.
- Keep in touch with friends and co-workers even when you can't get together in person. Text, phone or video chat can help you stay connected and keep your mind active and healthy.

# Your summer smile list



- 2 Take your next meal outside. Check out pages 8-10 for tips and recipes.
- 3 Try something new, such as learning a language, to keep your brain active. Find out more about brain health on pages 12-14.
- (4) Give blood at your local blood bank.
- (5) Make it easy on the Tooth Fairy by sleeping with the windows open.

- 6 Learn your town's history, then take a stroll with a fresh perspective.
- 7 Bury a time capsule in the backyard and make plans to dig it up in 10 years.
- (8) Unplug from the internet, radio, TV and social media for 24 hours.
- (9) Listen to an audiobook in a hammock.
- (10) Go on a nature scavenger hunt.

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Essential oils, used for centuries as a natural medicine, have regained popularity in recent years. These fragrant, highly concentrated oils are extracted from plants. There are at least 3,000 types of essential oils.

These natural oils have been used to treat a wide variety of ailments such as dandruff, indigestion, nausea and heartburn. They've also been used to boost moods, improve learning and memory, reduce fatigue and increase energy. Essential oils can either be used in aromatherapy or applied directly to the skin. There are also food-grade varieties of oils such as lemon, cinnamon, peppermint, orange and grapefruit that can be consumed, although there may be health risks associated with taking them that way.

### Benefits to oral health

- Fighting cavities and gum disease by reducing bacteria in your mouth. Some mouthwashes are made with essential oils such as tea tree and eucalyptus.
- Treating thrush, an infection that causes white patches in your mouth. Clove, cinnamon, lemon and tea tree oils are antioxidants that have healing potential and are commonly used to treat thrush.
- Relieving anxiety and pain during dental visits.
   Lavender oil is a favorite for aromatherapy, relaxation and stress relief. Orange oils can also be used.
- Combatting bad breath by adding a minty flavor to toothpaste, gum and mouthwash.
   Peppermint is widely used for this.

### Potential side effects

- Heartburn, nausea and vomiting, especially if consumed and not diluted.
- Fatigue and headaches when drinking them, such as by adding a few drops of oil to a water bottle.
- Allergic and toxic reactions, including a rash, welts, blisters and burning where the oils are applied.
- Dry mouth when consuming essential oils.
- Teeth and gum damage after applying an essential oil directly in your mouth.
- Other potential side effects include abdominal pain, a swollen throat and racing heart. More severe effects can include poisoning, seizures, kidney and liver damage.

Our verdict: Check with your physician and dentist before using essential oils, especially if you plan to consume them or apply them directly to your skin. Caution is especially advised for children, teenagers and women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

# grin!

# That's a relief! How your dentist reduces pain.



Does the thought of visiting your dentist make you a little uneasy? If so, you're not alone. At least half of all people feel anxious about going to the dentist. This is especially true for those who have a procedure coming up that could have some pain involved — such as filling a cavity or removing wisdom teeth.

Fortunately, dentists have a variety of ways to help ease pain and anxiety for both adults and children to make them feel more comfortable. The type of anesthesia and sedation used depends on the patient and the type and length of dental treatment needed.

Local anesthesia reduces or eliminates pain in the area where it's applied. It is given as an injection. The anesthetic numbs the area where the dentist needs to do a procedure, such as extracting a tooth or filling a cavity. It usually takes effect within a few minutes and lasts for an hour or two. Topical anesthesia is often used before an injection and is applied directly in your mouth as a liquid, cream, ointment, gel or spray.

### Sedation

A sedative can be used when you need something beyond local anesthesia to help you relax and stay comfortable during a dental procedure.

### MILD

### Nitrous oxide

Sometimes known as "laughing gas," nitrous oxide is a mild sedative used to ease pain and anxiety. It can be safely used with children and those who might have difficulty sitting through a dental procedure due to fear, a gag reflex or special health care needs. The gas is inhaled with a mask and can help you feel calmer and more comfortable within minutes.

### MODERATE

### Intravenous (IV) sedation

This fast-acting sedative is injected into your bloodstream. The level of sedation can range from minimal to deep, depending on the type and amount used. You may feel drowsy or even fall asleep during the procedure. IV sedation is often used for lengthier procedures, such as wisdom teeth removal or dental implant surgery, and is used more often with adults than children.

### DEEP

### General anesthesia

Delivered by gas, intravenously or both, general anesthesia makes you unconscious and unaware of your surroundings. While general anesthesia is an option for lengthy dental procedures such as extracting difficult wisdom teeth, it is used much less frequently than milder forms of sedation in dental practices.

Administration of both IV sedation and general anesthesia requires special training and certification of the provider. You are closely monitored during the procedure to ensure your safety. After the procedure, your dentist may recommend either a prescription or an over-the-counter drug such as aspirin, ibuprofen or acetaminophen to ease any discomfort.

Discuss pain-relief methods and any questions you may have with your dentist before a scheduled procedure for you or your child. You can also check whether it will be covered by your dental plan. Asking your dentist for a pre-treatment estimate can help you avoid unexpected charges.

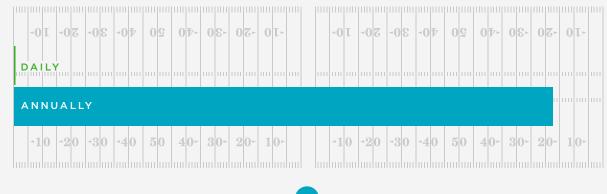
<sup>1</sup>University of Missouri — Kansas City School of Dentistry

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### Football fields of floss

If you use the recommended 18 inches of floss daily, that adds up to 182.5 yards annually.

That's nearly two football fields of floss you'll use every year!



•

BONUS FACT:

8% of Americans don't use an inch of floss. That's right. They say they never floss, which leaves them at greater risk for oral disease.<sup>1</sup>

2

### There's no substitute

Many Americans admit having used something other than floss between their teeth.<sup>2</sup>











### BONUS FACT:

63% of people surveyed admit that they know better than to use unsafe, unsanitary and ineffective items to "floss." Make sure to only use real floss, flossing tools or an electric flosser.

3

Useful any way you slice it Floss can come in handy in the kitchen, too. You can use it to cut cake, dough and soft cheeses like fresh mozzarella and goat cheese.



### **BONUS FACT:**

Here's one hack we don't recommend. The social media trend of flossing with a strand of hair is ineffective and possibly even dangerous for your oral health. Hair just doesn't cut it as a form of floss.

4

The founding father of floss
The invention of floss is credited to
a New Orleans dentist in 1815, who
recommended a thin silk thread
for cleaning between teeth.



### BONUS FACT:

The origins of floss go back to ancient times. Our ancestors used items like pointed sticks to remove food from their teeth. Ouch! 5

A surprising reason for not flossing
9% of people who don't floss daily say it's because they think flossing is gross.





### BONUS FACT:

Floss removes gross things from your mouth. About 40% of the work in cleaning food, plaque and bacteria from your teeth is done by flossing.

When it comes to floss, this is the most important fact — flossing daily helps protect you from cavities, gum disease and tooth loss. See page 7 for more facts about flossing. ■

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<sup>12.3,4</sup> American Dental Association



Make your portrait a faceful of inspiration with a healthy smile protected by high-quality dental benefits at an affordable price.



DeltaDental.com