## orin!

protein-packed recipes powered by cottage cheese DOES PURPLE TOOTHPASTE really whiten teeth

HOW TO LOWER your carbon footprint

Different types of DENTAL CLEANINGS



## spring 2024

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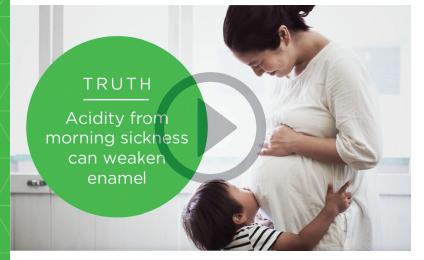
## grin! more

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



## WELLNESS+NUTRITION Refresh and revive your fruits and veggies

When your fruits and veggies start to wilt, it may be possible to restore them. Use these tips to give your produce a new lease on life.



## NEWS+RESEARCH Pregnancy and oral health

There are many oral health myths related to pregnancy — and it's time to set the record straight! Watch this video to separate fact from fiction.



## Looking for reasons to smile?

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

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ON TOPIC WITH DR. DILL

## Protect yourself from spring allergies

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

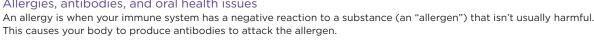
After spending more time indoors for winter, seeing spring in bloom can feel like a breath of fresh air — unless you have allergies that make the wonder of nature more challenging to enjoy.

But you don't have to let allergies spoil your good time! By understanding how they influence your oral and overall health, you can take precautions and help shield yourself from symptoms.

over 50 million AMERICANS EXPERIENCE ALLERGIES EACH YEAR, making them the sixth-most common cause of chronic illness nationwide.

## Allergies, antibodies, and oral health issues

This causes your body to produce antibodies to attack the allergen.



- Oral health symptoms include:
- Dry mouth caused by frequent mouth breathing or some allergy medications
- Tooth pain and increased sensitivity stemming from inflamed sinuses
- Bad breath and a sore throat caused by post-nasal drip
- Swelling or itchiness can also occur in your lips, mouth, and throat, particularly with food allergies
- Typical symptoms include red and itchy eyes, a runny nose, coughing, and sneezing.
- The severity of an allergic reaction can range from a minor irritation to a very dangerous response called anaphylaxis.
- · If you believe you have an allergy, consult your physician for testing and treatment.

A person can be allergic to almost anything. But springtime allergies are most often caused by pollen from trees, grasses, and flowers, or exposure to dust, mold, and pet hair or dander.

## Take control of the season

In most cases, allergies can't be cured. But with treatment and extra care, it is possible to reduce symptoms and limit your exposure to allergens. During the spring months:



- · Keep your windows closed and maintain your air quality with high-efficiency air filters.
- When you come inside, change clothes, and wash your hair and hands to remove collected pollen.
- Vacuum and dust 1-2 times per week to remove pollen and mold.
- Try gargling with a salt water solution to reduce bacteria and eliminate bad breath.
- Stay inside on dry, windy days and whenever pollen counts are high. You can check pollen levels at weather.com or pollen.com.

## Save your spring from allergies

Consult your physician if you need treatment specific to your allergies and remember to tell your dentist if you suffer from allergies or are taking any medication, as this may influence your oral health and treatment recommendations.

McDevitt, S.A. & Rosselot, G. Highly Allergic Travelers. (2023, May 1) from https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2024/additional-considerations/highly-allergic-travelers

## MOUTH-FRIENDLY RECIPE

## Healthy deviled eggs

Upgrade your traditional recipe with a healthy twist and savor the classic charm of deviled eggs with this creamy, protein-packed option. Made with Greek yogurt and a sprinkle of smoked paprika, these smile-friendly snacks burst with flavor and give a nod to your oral health.

## **Ingredients:**

6 large eggs

1/4 cup plain Greek yogurt

1 tablespoon pickle relish (or 1 small dill pickle, diced)

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar

1/2 teaspoon salt

Pepper, to taste

Smoked paprika, for garnish

## **Directions:**

- 1 Place eggs in a large saucepan, cover with water, and bring to a boil over high heat. Rapidly boil for 30 seconds, cover with lid, and remove from heat. Let sit for 10 to 12 minutes.
- 2 Transfer eggs to a bowl of ice water, or run cold water over eggs to cool.
- 3 Peel eggs and slice in half, removing yolks.
- 4 Place yolks in a small mixing bowl. Add Greek yogurt, relish, mustard, apple cider vinegar, salt, and pepper. Mash ingredients together with a fork.
- 5 Spoon the mixture into the center of each egg half.
- 6 Sprinkle with smoked paprika and serve.
- 7 Enjoy!



## Spring cleaning for your dental gear

Spring is here, and for some people, that means just one thing — spring cleaning! This year, don't forget oral health essentials like your retainer and night guard. Just like your home, your retainer and night guard need a good refresh, too, so let's get into how to keep them clean.



## Wash your hands

Before you even touch your retainer or night guard, scrub those hands! Dirty hands could result in you transferring germs and bacteria right back onto your freshly cleaned oral health gear.



## Soak in a special concoction

Every so often, your retainer and night guard may need a deeper clean. When this happens, try mixing water with baking soda, white vinegar, or denture cleanser and let it soak for about 20 minutes at a time. Your dentist may also be able to clean your retainer with a professional cleaning solution. Be sure to bring it to your regular dental cleaning appointments so your dentist can evaluate the fit and condition of your retainer.

You might be thinking, how do I know if it's time for a deeper cleaning? A good rule of thumb is if it starts to smell, taste odd, look cloudy, or if you see a film or white spots on it, it's time for a deep clean.

## Brush your teeth before use

Always brush your teeth before popping on your oral health gear. Just like with dirty hands, a dirty mouth will leave your retainer and night guard germy.





## Brush your retainer and night guard

Use a soft-bristled toothbrush to brush your retainer and night guard before use. Toothpaste should be used when brushing your night guard, but check with your dentist before using toothpaste on your retainer. Some toothpastes can be too abrasive, especially if they have whitening ingredients.



## Rinse before and after use

Make sure to always rinse your oral health gear with cool to lukewarm water when putting your retainer and night guard on or taking them off. Never use hot water, as it can warp the shape.



## Store in a protective case

Store your retainer and night guard in a protective case. And to prevent bacteria growth, make sure your case is dry or has holes for ventilation. As an added step, also consider washing your case once a week. Some retainer cases are even dishwasher safe.



Why do your retainers and night guards need cleaning anyway? Just like your teeth, bacteria, plaque, and tartar can build up on your oral health gear, too. Ignoring them is an invitation for cavities to settle in your mouth. It's also a good hygienic practice to keep your mouth's accessories sparkling.

So, as you spruce up your space this spring, don't forget to give your retainer and night guard some attention, too. Happy spring cleaning!



## Readers ask, we answer

Deidre asks:

"How is AI used in dentistry?"

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

Sometimes it seems as if artificial intelligence (AI) is entering our lives faster than we know what to do with it. From news articles to artistic creations, AI and other advanced technologies are changing how we live and work — and that includes the field of dentistry.



## First things first: What is AI?

Artificial intelligence, put simply, is cognitive thinking demonstrated by a machine instead of by a person. A key component of AI is that it has the ability to learn and adapt as it interacts with its environment or new data.

Because it can think and learn, Al can be used to support the team at your dentist's office as they work to protect your oral health. Here are just a few ways this emerging technology has begun to shape the dental offices of tomorrow.



## Image analysis and diagnosis

Innovations around AI technology that reviews X-rays and other scans is currently being developed. This kind of technology can assist your dentist in detecting cavities and other oral health issues early, so they can be addressed before progressing to more serious and expensive problems.



## Augmented reality for real teeth and gums

Virtual reality tools can be used to provide cuttingedge training to dentists or help educate patients about necessary treatments and procedures.

Even more impressive are augmented reality tools, which overlay digital information onto a real-world environment (smart glasses are a well-known example of this). In the future, this could even support your dentist in real time during a procedure, enhancing their accuracy and improving patient outcomes.



## Administrative support

By acting as a virtual assistant, AI can simplify and automate tasks, such as appointment scheduling and routine billing, freeing up the staff at your dental office to complete other work or increase time with patients.



## Data review and treatment planning

Al uses algorithms that can process and review data at a much faster rate than a person. Because of this, it can be used to review patient medical histories and treatment outcomes to identify patterns and help your dentist provide more personalized, proactive care.



## Al can enhance dentistry

Artificial intelligence is a new and exciting technology. By using AI to support the experience and expertise of trained dental professionals, modern dentist offices can become even more efficient and effective in caring for your oral health.

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## HOW TO LOWER YOUR Carbon footprint

Earth Day focuses on protecting and healing the planet, but it also raises the question — what can we do to move beyond this one day and support a healthy environment all year long?



One way we can all help the environment is to lower our individual carbon footprint, which contributes to cleaner air by reducing overall carbon emissions. Let's look at a few simple ways we can all contribute to a cleaner environment.



## What is a carbon footprint?

A "carbon footprint" is simply a term for the amount of greenhouse gases — such as carbon dioxide — that a person, product, household, or business produces.

This is important to measure because reducing greenhouse gas emissions will help combat climate change, which is creating instability in worldwide temperatures, an increase in severe weather, and other global issues. By working to reduce our carbon footprint, we can all help restore a healthy environment!





## Let's make Mother Earth smile

Now that we know what a carbon footprint is and why we should lower it, let's review the most important part — how to live a more eco-friendly life.

## Repurpose or reuse old items

Instead of instantly replacing used or damaged items, see if you can find another use for them.



Old toothbrushes can be used to scrub and clean, or your kids can use them as paintbrushes.



Cut old clothes, sheets, and towels into small pieces and use them to dust.



Donate items you no longer need. If it's usable, it will be perfect for someone else.



If you can't repurpose an item, try to recycle it! Recycling at least half of your household waste can greatly reduce carbon emissions.

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## Continued from page 9

## Find ways to reduce waste

Modern luxuries like air conditioning and running water are easy to take for granted — which means that if you're not careful, you can overuse them and create a lot of waste. A few things to keep in mind:





electric bill.



Restore old clothes. Sewing and patching older clothes is less expensive and wasteful than buying new ones. If they just need a little sprucing up, toothpaste can be used to clean tennis shoes or remove stains.



have a full load.

Does your place of work have a sustainability program for eco-friendly business practices? If there isn't a formal program, see if you can start one yourself. It's an opportunity to contribute to your workplace and your planet at the same time.

## Purchase eco-friendly products

Using items that are designed to be energy efficient is an easy way to live more sustainably.



Carry a reusable water bottle instead of plastic disposable bottles that may end up in a landfill.



Make the switch to energy-efficient LED lightbulbs, which use up to 90% less energy than traditional bulbs.1



To make your oral health routine more environmentally sound, try using a biodegradable bamboo-handled toothbrush or a reusable water or air flosser instead of nylon floss.

## Go green one step at a time

These are just a few of the many ways you can live more sustainably. And it's important to remember that you don't need to overhaul your entire daily routine. Just start with a few small changes and go from there!



## Helpful habits for better sleep

Spring can bring rain showers, new flowers, and daylight saving time — the last of which can throw off your sleep schedule. But the right bedtime routine can help! By tweaking your nightly schedule in small ways, you can train your body to get better rest.



The benefits are well worth it: Over time, better sleep can reduce your risk for many oral and overall health issues, from stress-related teeth grinding to chronic illnesses such as heart disease and obesity.

## Ready ... Set ... Snooze

Does your routine help you sleep? Review some common unhealthy habits on the left and compare each one to a healthier alternative on the right.





## Common unhealthy habits

- Don't go to bed at a set time.
- Use streaming apps or social media in bed.
- Take long naps in the afternoon.
- Toss and turn thinking about tomorrow's tasks.
- Drink a cup of coffee as a nightcap.
- Smoke a cigarette or have a cocktail to relax.



## Healthy habits for a restful night

- Train your body to rest by going to bed at the same time each night.
- Remove screens from your bedroom to create a dark, relaxing atmosphere.
- Limit naps to 20 minutes in the early afternoon. This gives you an energy boost without disrupting your evening rest.
- If you can't sleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed and complete a brief, screen-free task, like using a pencil and paper to plan tomorrow's day.
- Avoid caffeine after 2:00 p.m.
- Abstain from tobacco two hours prior to bedtime and stop drinking alcohol at least four hours before. Both can reduce the quality and quantity of your sleep.

lacurci, Greg. 8 easy — and cheap — ways to cut your carbon emissions. (2023, August 30) from https://www.cnbc.com/2023/08/30/8-easy-and-cheap-ways-to-cut-

spring 2024 grinmag.com

## cottage cheese More than just a stand-alone snack, cottage cheese is packed with calcium and protein for strong teeth, bones, and muscles. And it can be used as a mouth-friendly ingredient in recipes for many favorite spring foods!

## RECIPE #1:

## Cheesy pita flatbread

As filling as it is cheesy and wonderful, this flatbread can satisfy a pizza craving without all the grease and fat. Plus, vitamin K from the asparagus supports strong bones and teeth!



## **Ingredients:**

- 2 cups asparagus, chopped
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1½ cups cottage cheese
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1½ cups sharp provolone cheese, grated
- 3 tablespoons parsley, basil, chives, or dill (optional)
- 4 medium-size whole-wheat pitas

## **Directions:**

- 1 Preheat oven to 425 F.
- 2 Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
- 3 Toss asparagus with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
- 4 Place asparagus on one baking sheet and roast for 5 minutes.
- 5 Blend cottage cheese in a blender until smooth.
- 6 Combine cottage cheese, salt, pepper, 1 cup provolone, and herbs in a medium-size bowl.
- 7 Place the pitas on the second baking sheet.
- 8 Spread cottage cheese mixture on each pita, leaving about a ½-inch border around the edge.
- 9 Sprinkle asparagus and remaining  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup provolone over the cottage cheese mixture.
- 10 Bake for 15 to 18 minutes, until golden brown.
- 11 Enjoy!

## RECIPE #2:

## Veggie dip

This healthy dip really packs in nutrients due to the veggies you eat with it. Choose carrots or bell peppers with vitamin C for your gums, or get potassium (which helps lower blood pressure) from celery.



## **Ingredients:**

- ½ cup cottage cheese
- 1 tablespoon fresh dill, chopped (add more to taste)
- 1 teaspoon seasoning of choice such as ranch powder, dried thyme, red pepper flakes, or oregano
- 1 teaspoon olive oil

Veggies like carrots, celery, or bell peppers for dipping

## **Directions:**

- 1 Combine cottage cheese, fresh dill, and seasoning of choice in a bowl.
- 2 Drizzle with olive oil.
- 3 Dip your favorite veggies and enjoy!

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Continued from page 13

## RECIPE #3:

Carrot cake with cottage cheese frosting

With whole wheat flour, coconut oil, and cottage cheese in place of cream cheese, this low-sugar cake is a nutrient-rich way to delight your taste buds.



## **Ingredients:**

## FOR THE CAKE:

1½ cups whole-wheat flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon cinnamon

½ teaspoon nutmeg

4 eggs

2 tablespoons coconut oil, melted and cooled

5 tablespoons honey

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 tablespoons low-fat milk

2 cups raw carrots, grated

## FOR THE FROSTING:

1 cup cottage cheese

2 tablespoons plain Greek yogurt

2 tablespoons honey

2 tablespoons coconut oil, melted and cooled

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

## **Directions:**

## FOR THE CAKE:

- 1 Preheat oven to 350 F.
- 2 Coat a baking pan with nonstick cooking spray.
- 3 Mix the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and spices in a bowl.
- 4 Whisk eggs and blend in the coconut oil, honey, and vanilla in a separate bowl.
- 5 Combine wet ingredients with the dry and mix thoroughly.
- 6 Add in the grated carrot.
- 7 Pour mixture into a baking pan and bake for 25 to 30 minutes.
- 8 Let cake cool while preparing the frosting.

## FOR THE FROSTING:

- 1 Combine all ingredients in a bowl and blend until smooth.
- 2 Cover the bowl and place in the fridge for 20 minutes.
- 3 Spread the frosting on top of the cooled cake.
- 4 Enjoy!

If you want more cottage cheese recipes, they're easy to search for online. Just remember to look for mouth-friendly options that are low in sugar and use healthier ingredients (like whole-wheat bread instead of processed white bread, for example.)

## mmmmmm Your SPRING smile list mmmmmm

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- 1 Fill up your water bottle and hit the trails.
- 2 Develop a bedtime routine for peaceful slumber.
- 3 Whip up some deviled eggs for a picnic see our recipe on page 5.
- 4 Go for a walk or ride your bike for a better view.
- 5 Close your eyes and listen to the birds sing.

- 6 Throw open the windows, turn up the tunes, and tackle your spring cleaning.
- 7 Pick a basket of fresh strawberries at your local strawberry patch.
- 8 Get out into the wide-open spaces and fly a kite.
- 9 Check out a spring-themed book to read.
- 10 Visit a local arts and crafts fair.

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Wellness trends come and go, and the same goes for oral health fads. Have you caught the latest buzz on social media about purple toothpaste? It's believed that purple toothpaste can whiten your teeth. Does it really work, or is it just another trend that will fade away? Let's dive in and find out!

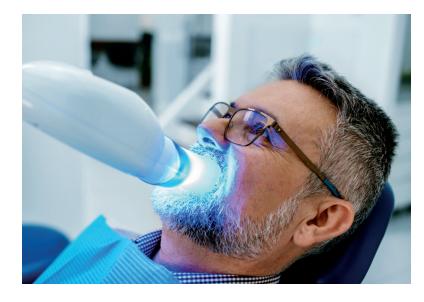


## So what is purple toothpaste?

Purple toothpaste is toothpaste with FDA-approved synthetic colorants to give it a bluish-purple color. It is believed to make teeth appear whiter because of color theory. Purple sits opposite yellow on the color wheel, so it should neutralize yellow tones in your teeth. This is a similar theory to that of purple shampoo, which people use to combat brassy or yellow tones in blond or gray hair.

While it may be effective in making your teeth appear brighter or whiter for a short time, it does not actually remove any stains from your teeth. Typically, you can expect results to last anywhere from a few hours to a day. This means it's more of a quick, temporary solution for yellow-looking teeth.

Permanent teeth whitening will only occur if tooth stains are physically removed or if you use a chemical teeth bleaching product that lightens tooth color with ingredients like hydrogen peroxide. This can be done through traditional whitening methods, like professional treatments, from your dentist or over-the-counter whitening strips.



Our verdict: Purple toothpaste does not really whiten teeth, but it could be a good temporary fix for a whiter appearance. Talk to your dentist to determine if purple toothpaste is a suitable short-term option or to discuss traditional whitening methods instead. Always consult your dentist before trying a new oral health product to ensure it is safe for you. New, trendy products promising miraculous results are rarely all they are hyped up to be.

## Different types of dental cleanings

A major advantage of having dental benefits is access to affordable care when you need it — so you always have help maintaining a clean, healthy smile.



Depending on your oral health needs, your dentist can perform several different cleaning treatments, from a routine checkup to deeper treatments such as scaling and root planing. Let's review what you can expect from each one.

## Routine cleaning

Your dentist or dental hygienist will clean your teeth at your regularly scheduled dental visits. This cleaning (technically called "prophylaxis") includes removing plaque and bacteria from the entire surface area of your teeth. They will also check for any other issues that may need addressed.

## Full mouth debridement

This is similar to a routine cleaning, but it takes longer and is performed on patients who have had plaque and tartar build up over a period of years. The presence of plaque and tartar makes it difficult to assess your oral health, so this deep, full mouth cleaning will need to be completed before checking for any undiagnosed oral health issues. In certain cases, a special tool may be used to break up the tartar and plaque with ultrasonic vibrations so it can be removed more easily.

## Scaling and root planing

Periodontal pockets are spaces or openings that can develop near your gum line. They are difficult to clean and can collect bacteria, which can lead to mild to moderate gum disease or bone loss around the teeth. When this happens, your dentist may recommend a treatment called scaling and root planing.

- Scaling cleans the surfaces of your teeth and below your gumline. This is typically done using dental instruments that chip away tartar and a high-powered water spray to wash away plaque.
- Root planing is when your dentist uses special tools to smooth the root surfaces of your teeth. Since plaque and bacteria are hard to remove from rough areas of your root surfaces, this smoothing helps prevent further buildup and reduces inflammation.

Your dentist or dental hygienist typically will not perform scaling and root planing on your entire mouth in one appointment, and it generally requires the use of a local anesthetic, Novocain. Instead, the procedure is completed over the course of at least two visits.



Maintain regular dental appointments and a daily oral health routine to reduce the likelihood that you will need a full mouth debridement, or scaling and root planing treatment. Brush twice per day with a fluoride toothpaste and a soft-bristled toothbrush, reaching the entire surface of each tooth, and remember to floss daily.



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## Dental benefits lead to clean, healthy smiles

No matter what oral health issues you face, your dentist can help you maintain a strong, clean smile. Dental benefits help make this more affordable, with most plans covering 100% of routine checkups and a certain portion of other procedures and treatments.

If you'd like to locate an in-network dentist near you, visit deltadental.com. Members can log in to review their complete plan details.

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Did you know that, even before birth, baby teeth — or primary teeth — are developing beneath the gumline? It's true! The basic substance of the tooth forms at about six weeks of pregnancy. By three to four months of pregnancy, the hard tissue that surrounds the teeth is developed. Before even entering the world, all 20 baby teeth will be almost fully formed under the gumline. And by age 3, a child should have most of their baby teeth fully emerged in their mouth.

## ANATOMY OF A TOOTH:

# Dentin Pulp Root

- Enamel: the harder outer layer
- Dentin: the inner main part
- Pulp: contains nerves and blood supply
  Root: anchoring the tooth into the jaw

All four parts play a significant role in a child's oral health.

## TEETH DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE:



## HERE ARE FIVE ESSENTIAL STEPS TO KEEP A CHILD'S SMILE HEALTHY:



## Healthy prenatal nutrition

Because tooth development begins in the womb, a mother's nutrition during pregnancy is important in the development of the baby's teeth. Expecting mothers should do their best to get essential vitamins and calcium every day.



## Clean gums before teeth emerge

Before the first primary teeth even pop up, gently wipe your baby's gums with a soft, damp cloth after feedings. Not only does this keep gums clean and bacteria free, but it also introduces babies to an oral care routine.



## Start brushing when the first tooth appears

As soon as the first baby tooth emerges, it's time to begin brushing with a toothbrush and a grain-of-rice-size smear of fluoride toothpaste. Upgrade to a pea-size dollop when your child turns 3. And don't forget to floss once those teeth start getting cozy next to each other.





## First dentist visit by age 1

Children should have their first dentist visit within six months of getting their first tooth and no later than their first birthday. This early checkup helps prevent cavities, monitors the child's development and bite, and allows them to get comfortable with dental appointments.



## Teach healthy eating habits

As soon as a child can start having solid foods, it's important that they eat a well-balanced diet. This is important to keeping teeth — even baby teeth — healthy. Also, make sure to limit sugary snacks and drinks. For instance, make sure to avoid giving children sugary drinks in their bottle or sippy  $\sup$  this includes milk, too — during a nap or bedtime.

Don't be persuaded by the assumption that baby teeth do not matter. Instead, lay the foundation for a lifetime of healthy smiles by taking proper care of baby teeth — even if they are temporary.

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## EVERY ATHLETE DESERVES A WINNING SMILE

Spring sports like baseball, softball, and lacrosse aren't just about wins and losses. They're also about improving your health and sharing laughs with your friends and teammates!

But to keep the fun going, you need to shield your teeth and gums from injury. Wearing a mouth guard during physical games and activities will keep you smiling all season long.

## When should you wear a mouth guard?

## While playing sports

This includes both contact sports and games with a chance of accidental contact:

- Boxing
- Lacrosse
- Field hockey
- Baseball

- Martial arts
- Ice hockey
- Soccer
- Softball

- FootballRugby
- Basketball
- Wrestling
- Volleyball

## During physical activities

Protect your smile when there is a higher than average risk of a fall or collision. This would include mountain biking, skateboarding, skiing, snowboarding, and similar activities.

## Gear up with a mouth guard

Delta Dental Athletic Mouth Guards offer 2x the impact absorption and can be purchased at deltadental.com. **Use promo code GEARUP to save 25**%!



