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Thrive with the  
**POWER**  
— OF —  
gratitude

Work at staying healthy  
on the job

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What does the color of  
my tongue mean?

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How scary is Halloween  
for your teeth?

in this issue of  
**grin!**

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What does the color of my tongue mean?

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



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FUN + INSPIRATION



6 ways to help your picky eater

Young kids who are fussy about food may not be getting the nutrients needed for a healthy smile. Check out our tips to help expand their horizons when it comes to trying new foods.

WELLNESS + NUTRITION



Early oral cancer detection can save lives

You should check your lips, mouth and throat for signs of oral cancer every month. Learn what symptoms to look for and report to your dentist.

Access the digital version anytime, anywhere at [grinmag.com](http://grinmag.com).



## On topic with Dr. Dill: potential dangers of ignoring a toothache

The nerves inside your teeth are among the body's most sensitive. So the pain, throbbing and sensitivity caused by a toothache are hard to ignore. This discomfort provides a powerful incentive to see your dentist right away. But the potential complications of a toothache offer an even stronger reason to seek help immediately.

### What could happen if you delay seeing a dentist

**Greater cost and pain:** A toothache that goes untreated can lead to more extensive and costly dental procedures such as root canals and crowns. It may even result in tooth loss.

**Infection that can spread:** Effects of a toothache can go beyond your mouth. It can result in an infection that can spread to your jaw, face, neck, heart and brain. Signs of an infection spreading may include a fever, headache, fatigue, dizziness, swelling, dehydration, rapid breathing, increased heart rate and stomach pain.

**Life-threatening condition:** In rare cases, an untreated toothache can take an unexpected turn for the worse. This happens when an infection causes an intense toxic response by your immune system — a condition called sepsis — which can lead to septic shock and even death.



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.

If you are experiencing pain in or around your tooth, don't delay in scheduling a visit with your dentist, who can diagnose the source of the issue and provide treatment options. As you wait for your appointment, over-the-counter pain medication may provide temporary relief. You can also try using a cold compress or rinsing with warm salt water.

### Common reasons for a toothache



**Tooth decay** is the most common source.



**Broken, chipped or cracked teeth** from an injury or accident, chewing on hard items such as ice, or grinding your teeth.



**Infected gums** from bacteria buildup can cause an abscess, pain, bleeding and swelling.



**Damaged fillings** that are worn, chipped or cracked may cause your teeth to feel sensitive.



**Tooth abscess** from bacteria infecting dental pulp — often through a decayed or damaged tooth — that then causes the pulp to die and a painful pus pocket to form around the tooth.

If you have a severe toothache — one that lasts longer than a day — get help right away. A toothache accompanied by a fever of 103 F or higher, along with symptoms such as chest pain, difficulty breathing, confusion, a skin rash or repeated vomiting, may be a sign of a more serious medical condition. Seek immediate treatment from a physician if you are experiencing any of these symptoms. ■

## Mouth-friendly recipe: stuffed butternut squash

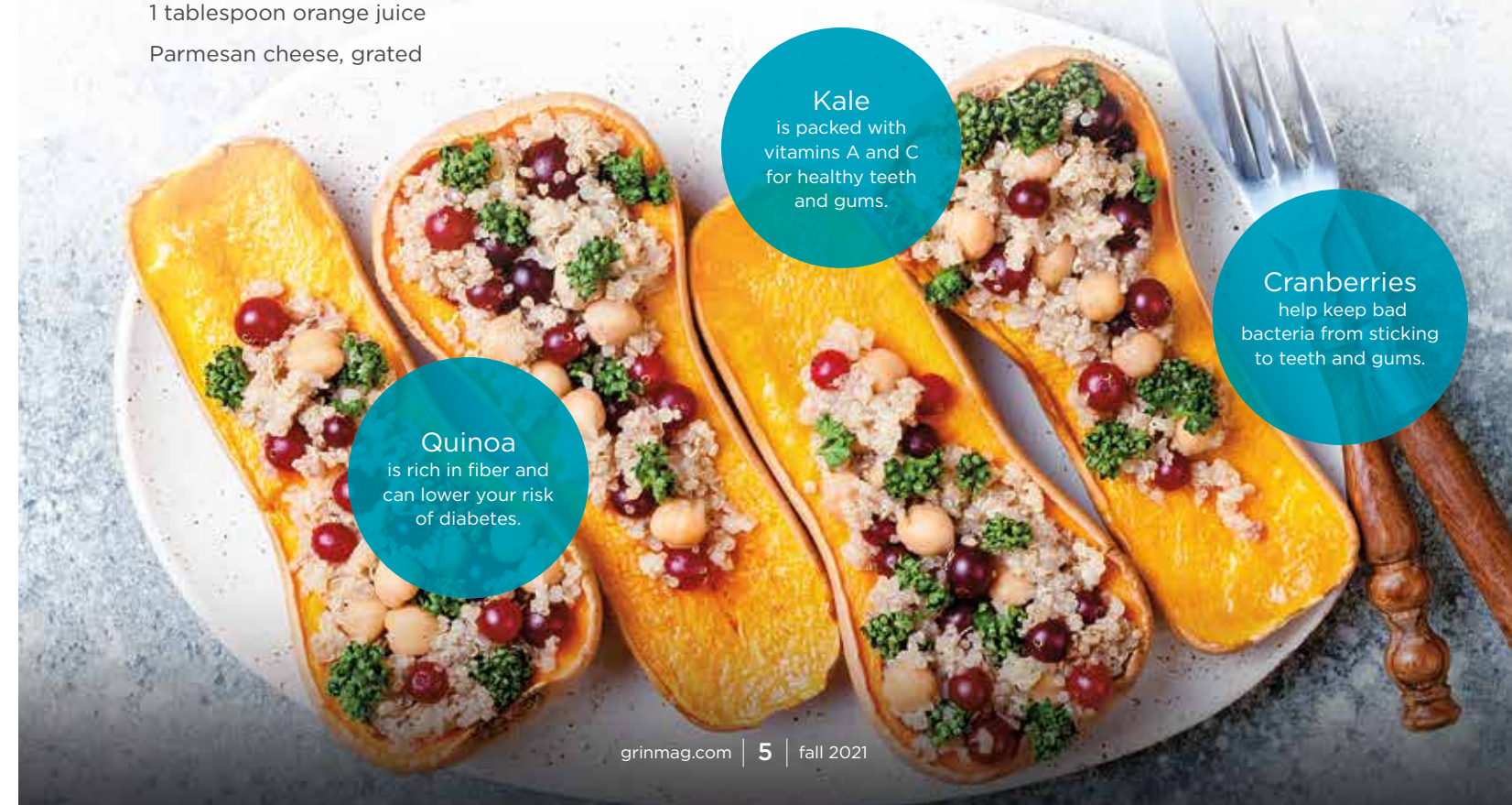
Serve up the colors and flavors of fall with this stuffed butternut squash! Filled to the brim with quinoa, kale and cranberries — ingredients that benefit your oral and overall health — this vibrant and satisfying side will brighten your smile and your next autumn feast!

### Ingredients:

- 2 medium butternut squash, halved with seeds removed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Black pepper, to taste
- 1½ cups chicken broth
- ¾ cup uncooked quinoa
- 1 bunch kale, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ⅓ cup fresh cranberries
- 15 ounces chickpeas, rinsed
- Zest of 1 orange
- 1 tablespoon orange juice
- Parmesan cheese, grated

### Directions:

- ① **Bake the squash:** Heat oven to 425 F. Arrange butternut squash with the cut side up on a baking sheet. Drizzle 1 tablespoon olive oil on squash and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake 45 to 55 minutes until squash is tender. Let squash cool before stuffing. Reduce oven temperature to 375 F.
- ② **Cook the quinoa:** While the squash is baking, bring broth to a boil in a small saucepan, then add quinoa. Once it starts boiling again, reduce heat, cover and simmer 12 minutes. Remove from heat and let sit 15 minutes.
- ③ **Make the filling:** Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium heat in a large skillet. Add kale to skillet and cook 4 minutes until wilted, then reduce heat to medium low. Mix in garlic, oregano, salt and pepper. Cook 30 seconds until fragrant. Stir in cooked quinoa, cranberries, chickpeas, orange zest and orange juice.
- ④ **Stuff the squash:** Once squash is cool enough to handle, scoop out some of the flesh to make room for the filling. Add filling to squash halves, then bake for 10 minutes. Sprinkle with cheese and serve warm. Enjoy! ■



**Kale** is packed with vitamins A and C for healthy teeth and gums.

**Quinoa** is rich in fiber and can lower your risk of diabetes.

**Cranberries** help keep bad bacteria from sticking to teeth and gums.

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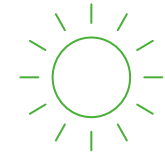
Strike a yoga pose.

- Try mixing yoga into your exercise routine to benefit both your mind and body.
- Yoga helps reduce stress that can cause teeth grinding and clenching, mouth sores and gum disease.



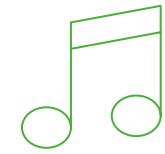
Eat good-mood foods.

- Add more asparagus, fatty fish, nuts and dark chocolate to your diet.
- Not only can these foods improve your mood, but the folic acid in asparagus and omega-3 oils in nuts and fatty fish may also help fight gum disease.



Catch some rays.

- Venture outside for a walk. When inside, leave blinds and curtains open and sit near windows.
- Studies show sunlight can lead to better moods and better sleep.



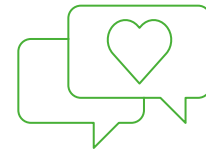
Make an upbeat playlist and sing along.

- Put your favorite songs together so they're easy to access whenever you need some good vibes. (And dance along for some extra fun!)
- You probably already knew this, but research proves it — happy music is a mood booster.



Be thankful.

- Take time to express appreciation and savor the moment.
- Showing gratitude is a natural mood booster that leads to greater happiness. See more on pages 12-14.



Connect with others.

- Spend time with people you truly enjoy being around.
- Sharing a few laughs with friends and family is relaxing and elevates your mood.



It only takes a few simple changes to spark more smiles. So give these tips a try and start appreciating their mood-boosting benefits now. ■

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Readers ask, we answer



*Jerry asks:*  
"What does the color of my tongue mean?"

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

Hi, Jerry! Your tongue color can say something about your overall health. A healthy tongue can range in color from light pink to light red and is covered with tiny bumps called papillae that give it a rough texture and help you eat, speak, taste and clean your mouth. If your tongue is a different color for more than a day or two, it could be a sign of a health problem.



**White or gray** patches could indicate a fungal infection, leukoplakia, HIV/AIDS or even oral cancer. Commonly, the top and sides of the tongue have a thin-white coating from debris, bacteria and dead cells caught in the papillae. A thick coating should go away with good daily oral health care.



**Black** can be caused by poor oral hygiene, tobacco use, medications or radiation therapy. It can also be the color of "hairy tongue," where the papillae grow longer and trap bacteria, debris and stains from tobacco, food and drinks. This can lead to noticeable color changes and bad breath.



**Yellow or brown** may appear if you smoke or chew tobacco. Yellow can also develop from a buildup of dead skin cells on your tongue. In more extreme cases, a yellow tongue could be a sign of diabetes, jaundice or psoriasis.



**Red** can indicate a fungal infection, inflammation, diabetes or a deficiency of vitamins and minerals such as B-12, iron and folic acid. Some conditions that change the tongue's texture and appearance may also cause red patches. Research shows that a swollen, red and bumpy tongue is one potential sign of COVID-19.



**Blue or purple** may appear when oxygen isn't circulating well or because of a possible blood disorder. Silver dental fillings can leave a blue spot in your mouth known as an amalgam tattoo, created by stray particles from the fillings. And enlarged blood vessels under the tongue — which are more common in older people — can also make the tongue blue or purple.

Don't panic if you just ate or drank something that turned your tongue a hue of the rainbow! Many foods, drinks and medications can temporarily stain your teeth and tongue because of their natural or added color.

Consult with your dentist and physician if your tongue continues to be a color other than pink for more than two weeks or if you notice any unusual lumps or swelling. Your dentist can help diagnose the problem and provide treatment. Also, be sure to clean your tongue with a toothbrush or tongue scraper as part of your daily oral health routine. ■

# WORK AT staying healthy on the job



Do you spend the majority of your workday at your desk? Sitting most of the day, along with other habits you develop while working, can take a toll on your health.



Fortunately, small adjustments to your daily work habits can potentially make a big difference for your health and well-being. Here are some ways to integrate healthier habits into your day, whether you're working in the office or at home.



### Stand up periodically

Pause a moment to stretch. If you can, take brief walks for five minutes each hour. Incorporating movement and exercise into your day has so many benefits, including boosting your energy, making you feel happier and healthier, and reducing your risk of chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. Research shows that short exercises throughout the day can help your performance and efficiency at work.



### Take screen breaks

Look away for about 20 seconds every 20 minutes to give your eyes a much-needed break. Staring at a screen for too long can harm your health. Make sure your screen is an arm's length away. Blue light glasses have gained popularity because they may help reduce eye strain. To prevent your eyes from drying, don't forget to blink or use artificial tears eyedrops.



### Sit up straight

Keep your neck from bending to one side for too long and change positions frequently. Poor posture can strain the muscles of your jaw, neck, shoulders and lower back. Bending forward for too long also upsets the balance of your head on your neck. This can give you headaches and neck pain, and change how your teeth come together when you bite. Maintaining good posture can help prevent added strain on your mouth and body.



### Unplug from electronics

Step away from your desk during lunch and other breaks. Taking time to enjoy your break will help you relax and reenergize. Reducing stress can help avoid problems such as nail biting, teeth grinding, canker sores and gum disease. By giving yourself this pause, you'll feel better prepared to tackle the rest of your day.

<sup>1</sup>Nielsen Report  
<sup>2</sup>British Heart Foundation

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Continued from page 9



#### Limit your coffee intake

Too much coffee can stain your teeth, cause headaches and anxiety, and make you feel jittery. Caffeine can contribute to dry mouth, and teeth grinding and clenching. Adding too much sugar to your coffee can lead to tooth decay.



#### Prepare a balanced lunch

Keep healthy foods on hand, including fruits and veggies, nuts such as almonds, lean meats, whole grains and cheese. Fueling your body with nutritious foods helps you stay energized at work, boosts your brain power and keeps your oral and overall health in check. Alternatively, foods high in sugar or fat can make you feel sluggish and drained.



#### Fill a reusable bottle with water

Sip on water throughout the day. Staying hydrated can help increase your energy levels, boost your mood and improve your memory and performance. Water keeps your mouth clean and helps prevent dry mouth, so it's good for your smile, too.



#### Keep your desk clean

Tidy up daily and reduce clutter. This can help lower stress and allow you to get a fresh start the next day. Use a disinfectant at least once a week to wipe down your desk, keyboard and phone, which can harbor germs that can potentially make you sick.



#### Find ways to unwind after work

Take time each day to relax, which can do wonders for your oral and overall health. As part of your self-care routine, don't forget to brush your teeth twice and floss once each day.

Giving your mind and body breaks throughout the day can benefit your health. Beyond your daily routine, be sure to take advantage of your PTO. Time off is key to staying healthy and refreshed long term. ■

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## How scary is Halloween for your teeth?



Do you help yourself to Halloween candy?

- A Never. (3 points)
- B I will indulge occasionally. (2 points)
- C I eat as much of it as trick-or-treaters do! (1 point)

It's best to limit the amount of Halloween candy you keep around. If you or your kids have leftover candy, pick a few favorites and donate the rest or see if your dentist has a candy buyback program.

If you do indulge, when do you treat yourself to candy?

- A I don't. Or if I do, only at mealtimes. (3 points)
- B As an occasional snack. (2 points)
- C I will eat pieces throughout the day. (1 point)

You produce more saliva during a meal, which helps wash away the sugar from candy. Snacking, especially grazing much of the day, can increase your risk of cavities.

After eating a treat, what do you do for your teeth?

- A I always brush 30 to 60 minutes after having a treat. (3 points)
- B I make sure to drink a glass of water. (2 points)
- C Nothing. Sugar on my teeth doesn't scare me. (1 point)

It's important to brush your teeth and drink water after consuming sugary foods. The longer the sugar stays on your teeth, the more damage it can do.

Do you snack when watching a scary movie?

- A No way. I'm too busy concentrating on the plot! (3 points)
- B I can't help but have some popcorn. (2 points)
- C I find comfort by munching on sweets and starches while sipping soda. (1 point)

Popcorn is high in fiber, but unpopped kernels can crack teeth and hulls can get trapped under gums. Avoid sticky, hard, chewy and crunchy sweets and starches like taffy, gummies, chocolate-covered raisins and potato chips that stick to teeth and cause cavities.

What are your family's must-do Halloween traditions?

- A Forget the candy. Pumpkin carving and haunted houses are the best! (3 points)
- B Dressing up and getting candy is our favorite part. (2 points)
- C We love candy *and* we bake other sweet treats for Halloween. (1 point)

Give your children other gifts such as stickers, toys and sugar-free gum, and look for alternate activities like a game night or scavenger hunt to celebrate the season.

Add up your points to see if you should be alarmed by Halloween's effects on your teeth.

12-15 points **Nothing frightening here**  
Congrats! You don't take a holiday from good oral health.

10-11 points **Might startle you**  
Make a goal to pay a little more attention to Halloween's scary side for your smile.

5-9 points **Could be spooky**  
This holiday could have chilling effects on your teeth. Try to limit the amount of Halloween candy you and your little ghouls and goblins keep around the house.

Have a happy Halloween! There are plenty of ways to celebrate the season and still keep a healthy smile. ■



Thrive with the  
**POWER**  
— OF —  
**gratitude**



It's as traditional as turkey and stuffing. When gathered around the Thanksgiving table, many people take time to reflect on the things for which they are thankful. But there's no reason to wait for a holiday to express your gratitude. Here's why appreciating and enjoying what you have each and every day can benefit your health and happiness all year long.

The benefits of expressing gratitude



Increase happiness

Gratitude has been proven to reduce negative emotions and increase positive emotions like happiness and empathy to allow people to better appreciate good experiences. The happier you are, the more you'll smile!



Improve self-esteem

Grateful people are able to appreciate others' accomplishments — a key factor in raising your own self-esteem.



Build stronger relationships

Couples who take time to express gratitude for their partners feel more positive toward that person. And thanking a new acquaintance makes them more likely to begin a friendship with you.



Experience better oral health

Gratitude can help lower stress, which is linked to oral health problems, including teeth grinding and clenching, gum disease and mouth sores. Not only can reduced stress help prevent some oral diseases, but better overall health is also linked to better oral health.



Enjoy improved health

Grateful people experience fewer aches and pains, and usually take better care of their health.

How to express more gratitude



Commit to practicing gratitude every day

Research proves that making an oath to show gratitude regularly increases the likelihood that you'll follow through.



Pay compliments

Let people know when they are a positive influence in your life. It can go a long way toward making their day, and it will make you feel better as well.



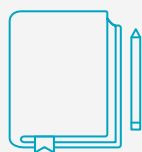
Be grateful for the past, present and future

Show thankfulness for positive memories. Enjoy good fortune as it happens by recognizing it and celebrating in the moment. Maintain a hopeful and optimistic attitude about the future.



Smile more often

Grateful actions like smiling will help spark your gratitude. Plus, smiling has been proven to reduce stress and improve health.



Keep a gratitude journal

Spend a few minutes every day writing down why you are grateful. Counting your blessings is a great way to start or end the day on a happy note.



Give thanks for your healthy smile

It's easy to take your teeth for granted, but they do more than help you smile. They're vital for talking, eating and so much more.

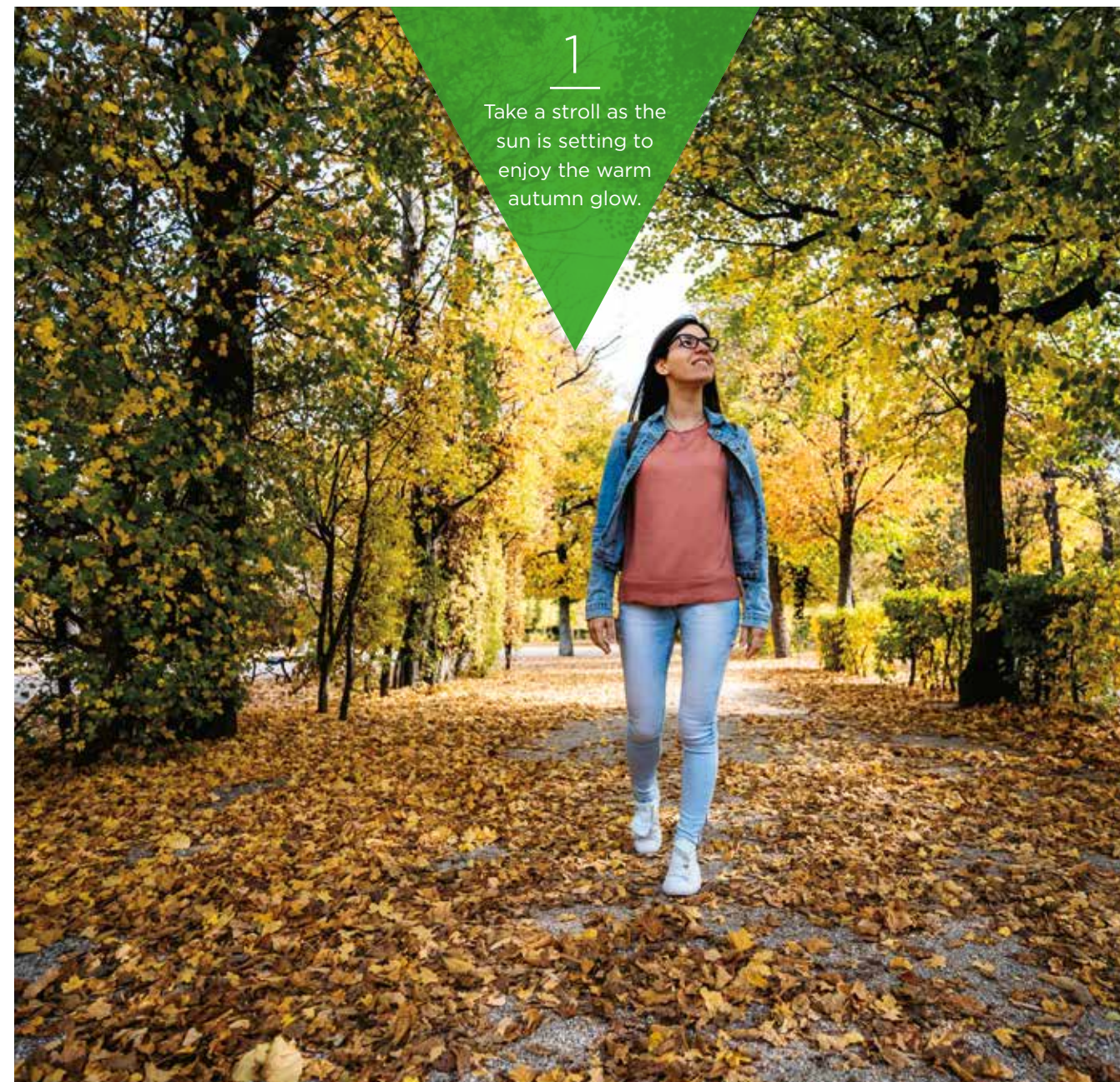


Write thank you notes

Penning a note of thanks is a win-win situation. Not only will you make yourself happier by expressing gratitude, but you'll also nurture your relationships with other people by expressing your appreciation to them.

Start working on becoming more grateful today. You'll thank yourself for doing so! ■

Your fall smile list



- ② Create a bountiful side dish for your Thanksgiving meal. See our recipe on page 5.
- ③ Reconnect with an old friend by sending a quick thinking-of-you text.
- ④ Savor every bite of your lunch away from any big or little screen.
- ⑤ Jot down what you're thankful for. Find other ways to express gratitude on pages 12-14.
- ⑥ Enjoy a warm green tea on a brisk day, and buy one for the next person in line.
- ⑦ Learn to knit and then try making a colorful scarf.
- ⑧ Plant fall containers to brighten your porch.
- ⑨ Organize a coat drive for your local community.
- ⑩ Stock up on your favorite fall-scented candles. ■





## Is liquid chlorophyll right for you?

Chlorophyll is a longtime friend of plants, making them green and helping them absorb energy from the sun. Drinking liquid chlorophyll as a supplement — by adding it to water — has now become one of the latest health trends. So can it benefit you?

There's still more research to be done, but here's what the latest studies show about the potential pros and cons of drinking liquid chlorophyll.

### Potential health benefits

- Boosts energy
- Stimulates the immune system
- Reduces acne and redness
- Heals skin
- Detoxifies the blood and body
- Combats bad breath and body odor
- Reduces inflammation, especially with arthritis
- Fights cancer by reducing tumors

### Possible side effects

- Nausea as the chlorophyll makes its way through your digestive system
- Vomiting, which produces stomach acids that can damage your teeth
- Stomach cramps and other abdominal discomfort
- Diarrhea that could last a few days
- Itching or burning when applied to skin



Liquid chlorophyll can also turn your tongue, urine and stools a different color such as green, yellow or black. This is temporary and harmless. To learn more about tongue color, see page 7.

Drinking liquid chlorophyll can pack a punch, but it isn't the only way to reap these natural plant-based benefits. You can get plenty of chlorophyll from wheatgrass, parsley, alfalfa, arugula, seaweed and spinach — all of which can be eaten with other foods or disguised in a smoothie. Other good sources of chlorophyll include green beans, peas, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cucumbers, lettuce and cabbage. These greens are excellent for your oral health.

**Our verdict:** Check with your physician before trying liquid chlorophyll. While the supplement is generally considered safe and nontoxic, it is not regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and may negatively interact with some medications, such as those that increase sensitivity to sunlight. ■

grin!

## Help your aging loved one keep smiling

If you're providing loving care to an aging parent or other older adult, pay close attention to their oral health. When you help them take care of their teeth and gums, you're also protecting their overall health and giving them a better quality of life.

That's because the mouth is an entryway to the digestive and respiratory tracts, and can spread bacteria and disease throughout the body. Research shows links between oral health and several chronic conditions such as heart disease, stroke, pneumonia, diabetes and Alzheimer's disease. Some oral health problems are more common in older adults.

### Oral health problems in adults 65+

- 68% GUM DISEASE<sup>1</sup>
- 30% DRY MOUTH<sup>2</sup>
- 20% UNTREATED TOOTH DECAY<sup>3</sup>
- 13% COMPLETE TOOTH LOSS<sup>4</sup>

Dry mouth and receding gums also cause about half of people 75 and older to develop root caries, or tooth decay at the roots of teeth.<sup>5</sup> In addition, 8 in 10 cases of oral cancer are found among older adults with an average age of 63.<sup>6</sup>

Help older adults protect their oral health by making sure they brush twice and floss once daily, maintain a balanced diet, drink plenty of water and limit snacks and sweets.

Dental coverage can help provide your loved ones with the oral health care they need. Most dental plans cover 100% of preventive care, which can diagnose problems and prevent them from getting worse. Coverage also helps reduce the cost of treatment if it's needed.

While Original Medicare and Medigap don't cover dental care, some Medicare Advantage Plans have dental coverage. You can also purchase individual dental coverage for your parent or loved one. Learn more at [deltadental.com](https://deltadental.com). ■

<sup>1,3,4</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<sup>2,5</sup>American Dental Association

<sup>6</sup>American Cancer Society



Caring for dentures is also important. Dentures should be rinsed after each meal and removed and cleaned each day. It can also be helpful to ask your dentist to place an identifier inside the dentures in case they're misplaced.

If your loved one lives in an assisted living facility or nursing home, special steps must be taken to ensure quality dental care.

### Questions to ask about a long-term care facility

- **Inquire** if there's a dentist or other trained dental professional on site.
- **Find out** how often residents get a professional dental exam and cleaning.
- **Ask** what's included in the daily oral health care routine and what policies ensure residents follow this routine.
- **Make sure** someone on the care staff is helping on a daily basis if your parent or loved one has difficulty taking care of their oral health.
- **Learn** about the facility's procedures for properly taking care of dentures.

Preventive care is key. That includes monthly exams to check for signs of oral cancer — looking for sores, swelling, white or red patches and changes to the lips, tongue and throat. It also includes regular preventive visits with the dentist for both professional cleanings and checkups. Contact the dentist right away if your loved one has any unusual symptoms, tooth decay or other oral health problems.

# Avoid these 5 FRIGHTFUL dental tricks



1

### Super gluing vampire fangs to your teeth

Some trick-or-treaters and partygoers who dressed as vampires have used nail glue or super glue to keep their fangs in place.



#### FRIGHTENING CONSEQUENCES:

Not only are these glues toxic, but you could also damage your tooth enamel, fracture your tooth or pull it out completely when trying to remove the fangs.



2

### Creating homemade braces

Recent videos demonstrate how elastic hair ties or rubber bands are used as alternatives to braces.



#### SCARY OUTCOME:

This homemade hack can result in serious damage to gums and teeth, lead to tooth loss and cause pain. Teeth must be moved into the right position over the proper amount of time by an orthodontist.



3

### Adding gems to teeth

Some people apply jewels to their teeth without engaging a professional who works in a sterile, clean environment.



#### CHILLING AFTERMATH:

If applied with the wrong bond, gems can cause tooth discoloration and damage. Even when properly attached, tooth gems can cause cavities and gum disease when food and plaque accumulate under and around the jewelry.



4

### Shaving down teeth with a nail file

If you can file your nails, why not your teeth? As a few DIYers found out, teeth don't grow back after being filed.



#### SPOOKY RESULTS:

This ineffective trick doesn't solve the problem of why teeth are uneven. Amateur dentistry of this type can result in pain, tooth sensitivity and cavities, along with teeth and nerve damage.



5

### Whitening teeth with 3% hydrogen peroxide

Social media users have shared videos of them applying peroxide to their teeth with cotton swabs.



#### CREEPY REPERCUSSIONS:

This bleaching method can result in tooth sensitivity and gum irritation. Your dentist can help you find safer whitening options.

Always talk to your dentist before considering any dental changes. Many professional procedures are surprisingly easy and affordable. ■



*YOUR TEETH NEVER RETIRE. PROTECT THEM WITH*  
**SMILE POWER!**<sup>TM</sup>

Own your retirement by keeping your healthy smile protected with high-quality dental benefits at an affordable price.

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