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REDUCE inflammation naturally

5 ways to manage
ADHD and oral health

Oral health pop quiz:
true or false?

Add flavor to your
coffee without
harming your teeth

in this issue of
grin!

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Reduce inflammation naturally

Painful, puffy inflammation is no fun for anyone, but a solution might be as close as your kitchen. Find out what naturally anti-inflammatory foods you may already have on hand.

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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



Get children involved in the meal.

Have picky eaters?

If your kids are proud members of the picky eaters club, we have a few tricks to put up your sleeve. After building some confidence in the kitchen and with meal planning, they'll be more willing to try new foods.

WELLNESS + NUTRITION



The facts of a tooth's life

Just like people go through a full life cycle, so do your teeth! From growing your first baby tooth to a full set of adult teeth, your smile goes through many phases. Follow along on the journey, which starts before you're even born.

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



On topic with Dr. Dill: balancing your mouth's pH



Meet Joseph Dill, DDS, Delta Dental's Chief Dental Officer. With more than 30 years of experience in the dental field, including eight in private and public health practice and 20 in dental insurance, Dr. Dill provides expert insights and helpful advice to keep you smiling bright.

Balance: it's what many people are trying to achieve in their lives. That balance is often between work, life, family and friends. But have you considered how to balance the pH in your mouth?

Why pH matters

The pH scale measures how acidic or how alkaline a substance is. The scale goes from 0 to 14, with 7 representing neutral acid levels. The lower the number, the more acidic; the higher the number, the more alkaline.

For comparison, plain water has a neutral pH level of 7.

The normal pH level of saliva is between 6.7 and 7.4, meaning it is relatively neutral. Multiple factors can increase or decrease the pH level of saliva, which can influence oral health.

Factors that increase acidity

- **Eating foods high in sugar:** Bacteria in your mouth release different acids when they break down carbohydrates, fiber, sugar and more. The increase in acids lowers your mouth's overall pH.
- **Highly acidic beverages:** Certain coffee drinks, soda and fruit juices are all high in sugar and acid, which will decrease your saliva's pH level.
- **Age:** Adults tend to have saliva with a lower pH (or more acidic) than children.
- **Tobacco use:** Both smoking and chewing tobacco increase the acidity of saliva.

pH and oral health

Your tooth enamel is the hardest substance in your body, but it's still no match for high acidity. When the pH level of saliva goes below 5.5, the enamel protecting your teeth loses minerals and starts weakening. Enamel cannot heal itself or grow back, so the damage done by high acidity levels can be long term. Brushing with fluoride toothpaste and drinking fluoridated water can help repair damaged enamel.

The erosion of enamel can lead to:

- Sensitive teeth
- Increase in cavities
- Tooth discoloration

Restoring pH

Use these four tips to help restore the balance naturally:

- 1 Enjoy acidic foods like tomatoes, grapefruits and oranges only in moderation.
- 2 Chew sugar-free gum to boost saliva production and wash away acids.
- 3 Reach for foods high in calcium, like soybeans and spinach, to help neutralize acids.
- 4 Wait 30 minutes to brush after eating or drinking anything that's highly acidic. ■

Mouth-friendly recipe: sugar-free apple crumble

Cave to your cravings without sacrificing your oral and overall health. Not sure about how a sugar- and gluten-free vegan treat will taste? Let your taste buds be the judge. This classic dessert is made with cozy autumn flavors and whole fruit. One bite and you'll fall in love!

Ingredients:

FILLING

- 1 large banana, thinly sliced
- 2 large apples, chopped
- 2 dates, chopped
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon fresh ginger, minced
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice

CRUMBLE TOPPING

- 1½ cups rolled oats
- ½ cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1 ounce walnuts, crushed
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Directions:

MAKE THE FILLING

- 1 Preheat oven to 375 F. Spray a small baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
- 2 Place sliced banana, apples and dates in a medium-size bowl.
- 3 Add cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and lemon juice; toss until everything is evenly coated with the spices.
- 4 Transfer the filling mixture to the prepared baking dish and bake for 8 to 10 minutes, until the fruit starts to bubble.

MAKE THE CRUMBLE TOPPING

- 1 In the same medium-size bowl, combine rolled oats with applesauce, walnuts, vanilla extract and salt; mix well with a spoon.

ASSEMBLE THE APPLE CRUMBLE

- 1 Top the baked filling mixture evenly with the crumble topping.
- 2 Return the baking dish to the oven and bake an additional 15 to 20 minutes or until the oats are slightly golden and crisp.
- 3 Let the apple crumble cool for 5 to 10 minutes. Serve warm. Enjoy! ■

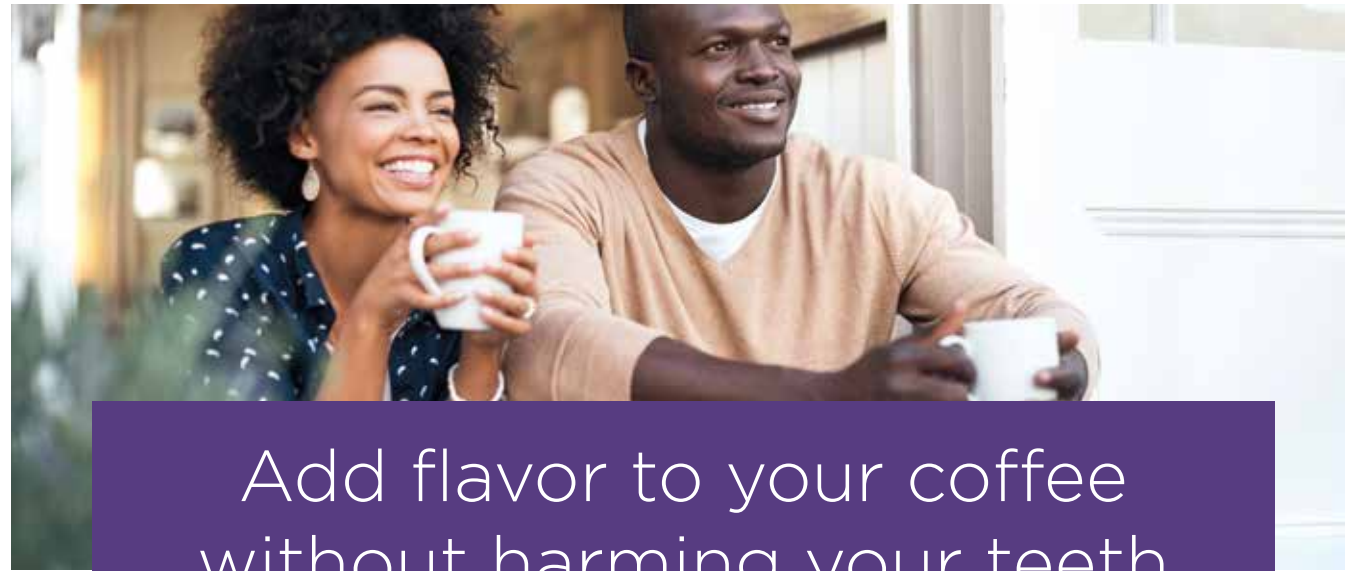


Apples
contain vitamin C,
which keeps your
gums healthy.

Bananas
are rich in potassium
that helps strengthen
your teeth.

Walnuts
are rich in iron,
which is essential
to healthy teeth
and gums.

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Add flavor to your coffee without harming your teeth

Calling all coffee drinkers! You may be a latte lover, but you probably don't love all the cavity-causing sugar that's in your favorite flavored syrup, creamer or sugar packet. Try some alternatives to keep the flavor but ditch the cavities.



1

Try a natural sweetener.

Stevia is plant-based, calorie-free and up to 450 times sweeter than sugar, although it can taste slightly bitter. Because it's a natural sugar, it doesn't have the same cavity-causing effect as refined sugar. Some research has suggested that using stevia may even prevent weight gain and can help reduce overall blood sugar levels.¹



2

Add cocoa powder.

Not only does cocoa bring more flavor to coffee, but it's also full of antioxidants. These antioxidants come with health benefits, like decreasing your risk of heart disease, improving blood flow for healthy gum tissue and reducing inflammation for lower risk of gum disease. Look for unsweetened 100% cocoa powder for the mocha flavor you crave without the sugary syrup.



3

Sprinkle in cinnamon.

Full of fall flavor, cinnamon is a fan-favorite addition to coffee. It also comes with some potential health benefits like anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory properties that may have a positive effect on fighting and preventing gum disease and tooth decay. Cinnamon can also lower blood sugar, cholesterol and triglycerides in diabetics. Try adding cinnamon to your coffee grounds before brewing traditional drip coffee to intensify the flavor.

Avoid staining your teeth by drinking your coffee in one sitting rather than sipping on it throughout the day, and drink a glass of water after your coffee to rinse your mouth and teeth. ■

¹National Center for Biotechnology Information, Effects of *Stevia Rebaudiana* on Glucose Homeostasis, Blood Pressure and Inflammation

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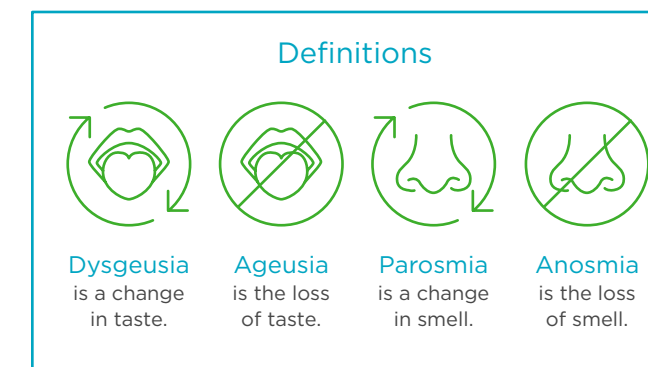
Readers ask, we answer

Allison asks:
"Can a change in smell or taste harm my oral health?"



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, Allison. Yes, a change or loss in smell or taste can make it more challenging to maintain a healthy smile. Though there are several reasons for an altered sense of smell or taste, these conditions have become more common as a symptom of COVID-19.



One survey reported almost 11% of people who've had COVID-19 developed parosmia.¹

The effects on your health

These conditions — especially parosmia — can lead to:

- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Depression

People with these issues may not get the vitamins and minerals needed to keep teeth strong. It may also become difficult to tolerate the taste of mint toothpaste.

If you develop any of these conditions:

- Attempt to find foods you are able to consume. Bland foods that haven't been heated may work best.
- You may still be able to keep your healthy smile in mind. Some people have had success trying mouth-friendly frozen fruit, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese and unflavored protein drinks.
- Try a different flavor of toothpaste. If that doesn't work, talk to your dentist, who can recommend alternative products to clean your teeth.
- Visit your physician to discuss the best ways to get the nutrition needed for a healthy body and smile. ■

Loss of taste and smell

People often lose their sense of taste and smell months after other symptoms of COVID-19 subside. Most people who lose their sense of smell because of COVID-19 will also lose their sense of taste and vice versa. This loss may last a few weeks but usually returns to normal.

Change in taste and smell

If you have previously lost your taste and smell, you are at increased risk of parosmia — a disorder where some or all things suddenly smell horrible, making it difficult to eat some foods.

There's no treatment for parosmia that happens due to COVID-19 and unfortunately, it can last for months. Thankfully, the damaged cells that control smell and taste can grow back, so the sense of smell can return to normal.

¹International Forum of Allergy & Rhinology



Oral health
pop quiz:
TRUE OR FALSE?

To say there is a lot of information on the internet would be an understatement. You can type anything into the search bar, and you'll have pages upon pages of results in seconds. But is it all true? Nope! Find out what is true and what is false.

Fluoride is an artificial ingredient added to toothpaste and water.

- Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral found in most water sources like rivers, lakes and even some oceans.
- It's often called nature's cavity fighter and has been added to many public water sources for the last 70 years to assist with preventing tooth decay.
- Even before your teeth have erupted, fluoride taken in from foods and beverages can help keep enamel strong and more resistant to tooth decay.



Dental sealants can help protect against cavities for as long as four years.

- Dental sealants are a thin coating placed on the chewing surfaces of children's back teeth (molars) to protect against cavities — and can last for four years or longer.
- Children between the ages of 6 and 11 without sealants have almost three times more first molar cavities than those with sealants.
- While sealants can do a great job guarding teeth against cavities, they're not a substitute for daily brushing with fluoride toothpaste and flossing. Fluoride is essential for protecting the smooth surfaces of the teeth.
- During routine checkups, your dentist will make sure sealants are still in place and advise if they need to be replaced or repaired.



Pregnancy doesn't influence oral health.

- Pregnancy can make you more prone to oral health conditions such as gum disease and cavities. It's safe to continue to see your dentist for routine checkups, cleanings and dental treatments when pregnant.
- It's important to keep up with healthy habits like flossing daily, brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and eating a well-balanced diet.
- If you suffer from morning (or any time of day) sickness, use a diluted mouthwash or mix 1 teaspoon of baking soda in a glass of water and rinse your mouth. This will wash away harmful stomach acid that could break down tooth enamel.



Soft toothbrushes are more recommended than hard-bristled toothbrushes.

- Soft-bristled toothbrushes are easier on your gums and enamel than a toothbrush with stiffer bristles but still do a great job of removing plaque and debris.
- You can select either a manual or an electric-powered toothbrush with soft bristles. Just remember to change your toothbrush or your toothbrush head every three to four months or when bristles become worn.
- Look for a toothbrush with a small head, angles and multilayers for a great clean, even in the hard-to-reach areas by your back teeth.



Charcoal toothpaste is safe for everyday use.

- Charcoal toothpaste has grown in popularity to whiten teeth. However, you should discuss any new whitening treatments with your dentist before you start to make sure they're the best and safest option for your teeth.
- Charcoal can be very abrasive and can wear down tooth enamel — the hard outer coating that protects your teeth.
- Most charcoal toothpastes also don't contain fluoride — a key ingredient needed to keep tooth enamel strong.

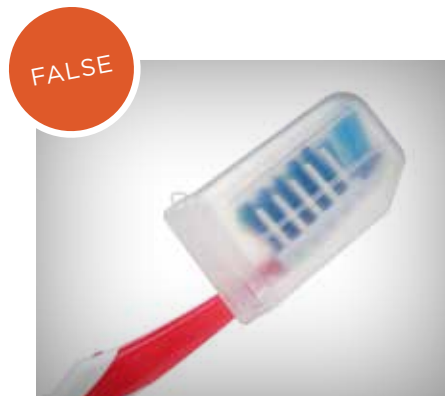




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Putting a cap on your toothbrush prevents bacteria from getting to it.

- Avoid covering your toothbrush or storing it in a closed container, as this can cause bacteria to grow on it. This can also happen when a toothbrush is stored in a drawer or touching another toothbrush, as it won't get the airflow needed to dry completely.
- To properly clean your toothbrush, first rinse it with clean water to get rid of any excess toothpaste. Then store it upright in the open air so it can dry out between uses.



You don't have to brush baby teeth.

- Once a baby's teeth start coming in, brush twice daily with a soft-bristled toothbrush and a tiny bit of fluoride toothpaste to avoid early oral health problems.
- You should use a smear of toothpaste (the size of a grain of rice) from the time the first tooth erupts until age 3. From 3 to 6 years, use a pea-size amount of fluoride toothpaste for children.
- It's highly recommended to take your child to the dentist for their first visit by their first birthday or six months after your baby's first tooth appears.
- While everyone eventually loses their baby teeth, it's still crucial to keep them cavity-free. Maintaining a healthy smile will help your child avoid pain and help ensure adult teeth develop and erupt properly.



Take a pause before believing something you find on the internet. And always check with your dentist or hygienist if you have any questions about your oral health. ■

Find your match: Which toothpaste flavor fits your taste?



What's your go-to beverage first thing in the morning?

- (A) Water works just fine for me. (3 points)
- (B) Gotta have coffee. Maybe with a little cinnamon or nutmeg. (2 points)
- (C) Once I tried matcha with honey, there was no going back. (1 point)

It's better to brush your teeth before drinking coffee rather than after. Brushing right after drinking an acidic beverage like coffee can damage your teeth's enamel.

Chicken sandwiches are a popular menu item. What do you order on yours?

- (A) Mayonnaise (3 points)
- (B) Hot sauce (2 points)
- (C) Sweet and sour sauce (1 point)

While mayonnaise and hot sauce have no sugar, many condiments are surprisingly high in cavity-causing sugar, including ketchup, honey mustard and barbecue sauce.

If you splurge at dinner, are you on team appetizer or team dessert?

- (A) Appetizer — bring on the charcuterie board. (3 points)
- (B) Appetizer — wings and dip — I like it all. (2 points)
- (C) Dessert — no doubt. (1 point)

Bad bacteria, in the form of plaque, feed on sugar, making your mouth more acidic and prone to cavities. After indulging in dessert, swish your mouth with water to wash away sugar.

When it comes to new products, how would you describe your attitude?

- (A) I'll stick with the old tried-and-true, thank you. (3 points)
- (B) I'll see how others like it first. (2 points)
- (C) I'm in line the first day it goes on sale. (1 point)

Before you try any new oral health products, always check with your dentist first to make sure those items are safe and effective.

What colors dominate your wardrobe?

- (A) Black, white, gray and blue. (3 points)
- (B) Red, orange and yellow. (2 points)
- (C) Purple, pink and teal. (1 point)

An untrue rumor claims you can tell the ingredients in your toothpaste by looking at the colorful squares at the bottom of the tube. Check the packaging instead.

Add up your score and see which toothpaste might fit you best.

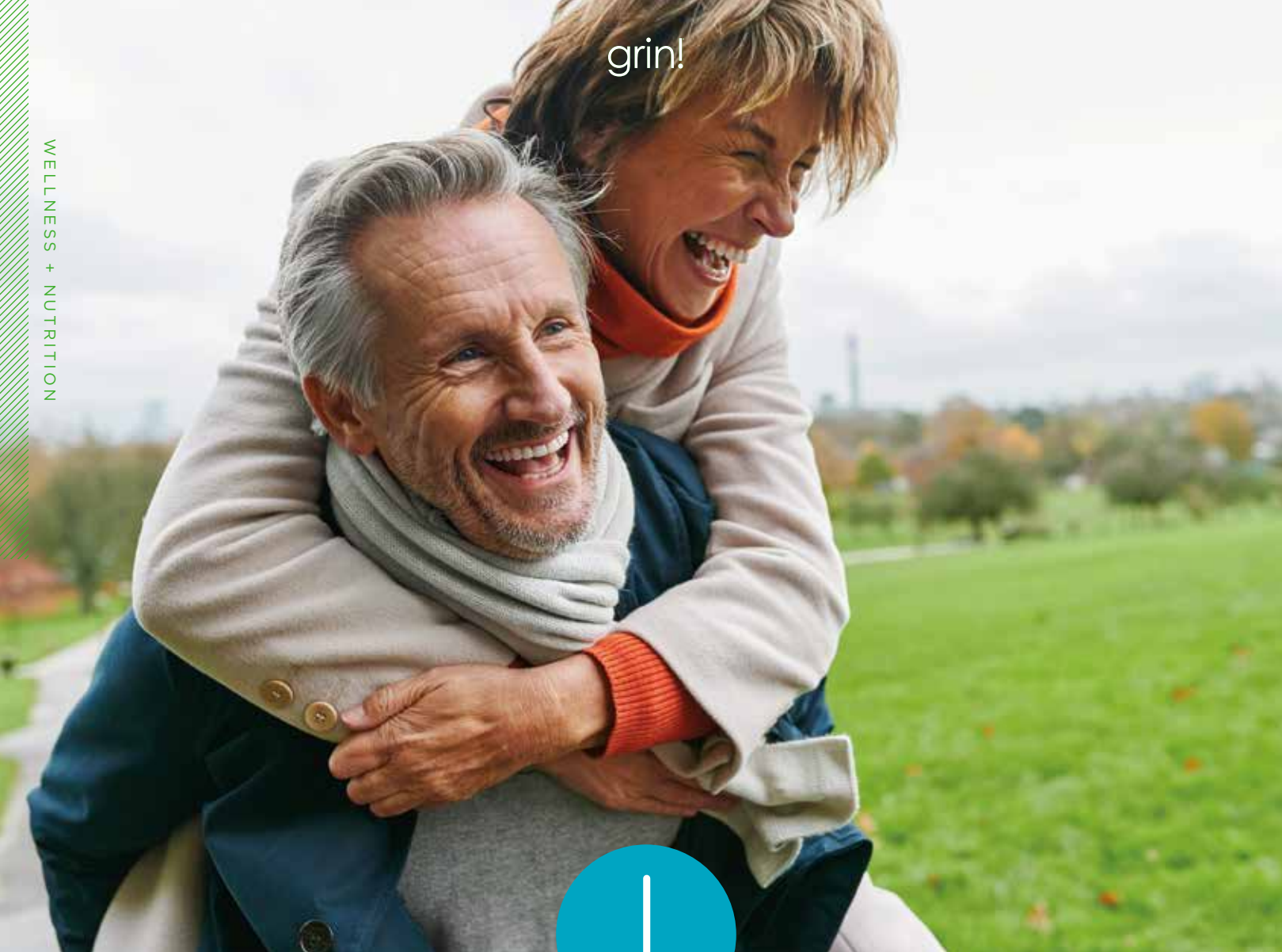
12-15 points **Mint**
Why mess with a classic? Good old mint toothpaste is your go-to.

10-11 points **Cinnamon**
You like to add a little spice to your life. You'll enjoy the extra kick cinnamon brings to your brush.

5-9 points **Bubble gum**
You're not afraid to be adventurous. You'll feel like a kid every morning when you enjoy a sweeter toothpaste.

No matter which flavor of toothpaste you choose, make sure it contains cavity-fighting fluoride to help strengthen tooth enamel and prevent tooth decay. ■

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REDUCE inflammation naturally

Inflammation can happen all over your body — gums included! What many physicians and dentists have begun to find is that anti-inflammatory solutions may already be in your kitchen. Consuming anti-inflammatory foods as part of a regular, well-balanced diet can reduce your risk and fight inflammation before it even starts.

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Anti-inflammatory foods that support your health and smile



Ginger

Ginger is known as a healing herb with anti-inflammatory properties that promote healthy tissue in the mouth. It's a great ingredient to incorporate into soups and teas to help with gum disease prevention.



Olive oil

Olive oil is a natural oil that comes from olives with a very low amount of saturated fat. The main fatty acid in olive oil is a monounsaturated fat called oleic acid. Some studies have found that oleic acid reduces inflammation and has benefits on genes linked to cancer. The main anti-inflammatory properties come from antioxidants, which have been shown to work similarly to ibuprofen as an anti-inflammatory.

Nuts

Inflammation is the body's way of protecting itself from injury, but long-term inflammation can lead to many health problems. The unsaturated fats and abundance of antioxidants in nuts like almonds, walnuts and pecans help reduce inflammation, especially for people with diabetes and kidney disease.



Dark leafy greens

High in fiber, dark leafy greens can help fight inflammation while also keeping your mouth clean. All that fiber requires some major chewing to break down, producing extra saliva that washes away harmful acids.



Fruits

Strawberries, blueberries and cherries are high in polyphenols and natural antioxidants. Polyphenols are protective, anti-inflammatory compounds found in plants that are great for supporting healthy gum tissue.



One of the most common symptoms and early indicators of gum disease is inflammation in the mouth.

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Ways to start incorporating anti-inflammatory foods

Snack mix

Combine a mix of nuts and dark chocolate for a snack that's full of healthy fats, antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties.



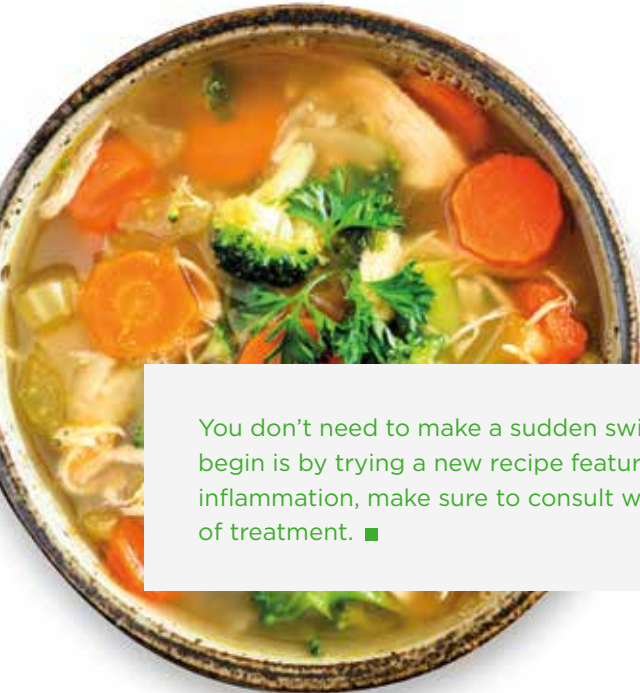
Smoothies

An easy and delicious way to add anti-inflammatory fruits, leafy greens and calcium-rich milk or yogurt to your diet is by adding them all together in a blender. Experiment with frozen versus raw ingredients to control the thickness of your smoothie based on preference.



Soup

The beautiful thing about soup is that you can throw almost anything into a pot and create something delicious. Leafy greens, mixed vegetables, olive oil — you name it. For maximum anti-inflammatory benefits, try your hand at making a soup with ginger at the forefront. For example, a chicken, garlic and ginger soup or a carrot-ginger soup.



You don't need to make a sudden switch to get the benefits of anti-inflammatory foods. An easy way to begin is by trying a new recipe featuring some of these antioxidant powerhouses. If you're dealing with inflammation, make sure to consult with your physician or dentist to determine the best course of treatment. ■

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Your fall smile list



1
Head to the library for a thrilling new read.

- 2 Turn fall's favorite fruit into a yummy sugar-free treat! See our delicious apple crumble on page 5.
- 3 Enjoy an early morning cup of joe. Learn how to make your coffee better for your smile on page 6.
- 4 Host a tailgate party and cheer on your favorite football team.
- 5 Make a big batch of chili to share with friends.
- 6 Read spooky ghost stories by a warm campfire.
- 7 Spend an afternoon getting lost in a corn maze.
- 8 Take in the gorgeous views nature has to offer from the comfort of the train.
- 9 Change out your wardrobe for the cooler weather.
- 10 Go to a show at the local theater. ■



What is tongue mewing?

We've all heard of defining muscles through exercise, but have you heard of exercises that can help define your jawline? Enter: tongue mewing — one of the latest trends online that claims it can change the shape of your jawline by focusing on tongue placement in your mouth.

Tongue mewing defined

Simply put, tongue mewing is the practice of placing your tongue against the roof of your mouth with the hopes of changing the shape, muscle tone and appearance of your face structure.

Tongue mewing claims to also help treat sleep apnea, sinusitis, snoring, jaw pain and more. Current research has not supported tongue mewing as a proven way to change the shape of your jawline.

The risks

Your jaw is just one part of a very complex structure that makes up your face, head and neck. It's impossible to change one part without influencing the others.

Possible dangers of tongue mewing:

- Misaligning teeth, and upper and lower jaw
- Pain in the temporomandibular joint (TMJ)
- Mistakenly trying mewing instead of getting needed dental treatment
- Prioritizing the jawline's appearance rather than its health and function

Our verdict: Practicing tongue mewing can't guarantee a difference in the appearance of your jawline and may come with risks that could lead to the need for more serious dental treatments. Discuss any changes to your oral health care routine with your dentist, who can provide recommendations and information to ensure you continue to have a healthy smile. ■



3 ways to prepare your smile for retirement

If you're nearing or in retirement, don't underestimate the power of a healthy smile. Good oral health can influence everything from your life expectancy to your quality of life.

Seniors are particularly vulnerable to cavities, tooth loss, gum disease and dry mouth (often caused by medications). In addition, oral cancer peaks in frequency in people ages 60 to 70.¹ There is also a strong link between dental health and overall wellness.

How to help maintain strong oral health in retirement



1 | Make sure you have dental coverage

The highest spending levels for adult dental care occur from ages 65 to 79, but original Medicare (Parts A and B) and Medicare supplemental coverage (Medigap) do not include dental coverage. As a result, nearly half of Medicare recipients don't have dental benefits.

Fortunately, there are other options:

- Medicare Advantage Plans (Part C), as most include dental coverage
- Individual coverage offered by providers like Delta Dental
- Medicaid (if you qualify), an employer retiree plan or a family member's employer plan — although only some seniors are eligible



2 | Consider investing in a Health Savings Account

If your employer offers a Health Savings Account (HSA), you can contribute tax-deductible savings that can earn interest or investment gains. The money you save in the account is yours to keep. You can continue to contribute until six months prior to enrolling in Medicare.

That money can then be used as a fund for out-of-pocket medical and dental costs in retirement.



3 | Maintain a consistent oral health care routine

While some of your habits may change in retirement, your oral health care regimen shouldn't.

Continue to brush your teeth twice a day for two minutes each time and floss daily. Schedule regular dental checkups. Your dentist can uncover oral and overall health problems early when they are easier and less expensive to treat. And eat a healthy diet that contains plenty of fruits, vegetables, lean protein, dairy and whole grains to enhance your oral and overall health.

While mostly preventable, tooth decay and gum disease are the most common chronic diseases in seniors. ■

¹National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research

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5

WAYS TO MANAGE ADHD and oral health



ADHD (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) is one of the most common disorders among children and diagnosis in adulthood is becoming more and more common. Everyone is different, so management of ADHD will also look different. Explore five ways to help manage ADHD while keeping a healthy smile.



1

Share with your dentist

Many of the medications commonly used to treat ADHD can cause dry mouth, which puts you at a higher risk for tooth decay and gum disease. Be sure to communicate with your dentist about all the medications and supplements you take, and if you or your child is experiencing dry mouth symptoms.

There is a link between ADHD and teeth grinding. If you experience teeth grinding while you sleep, talk with your dentist about options, which may include wearing a night guard to protect your smile.

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2

Establish a routine

While establishing routines may be challenging for those with ADHD, they can also be a helpful tool for making days run more smoothly. One of the first steps in establishing a routine is setting up reminders or notifications for daily and weekly tasks.

A way to use technology to your advantage is by automating recurring appointments and setting up reminders for important events and payments.



4

Plan your meals

Meal planning is great for maintaining a balanced, healthy diet. To start, keep a standing list of weekly grocery staples. Then, take a few minutes to add anything else you need before grocery shopping based on the recipes you've chosen for the upcoming week's meals.

Fresh ingredients that are low in fat, sugar and salt can make ADHD symptoms easier to manage and ensure your teeth get the essential vitamins and minerals they need.

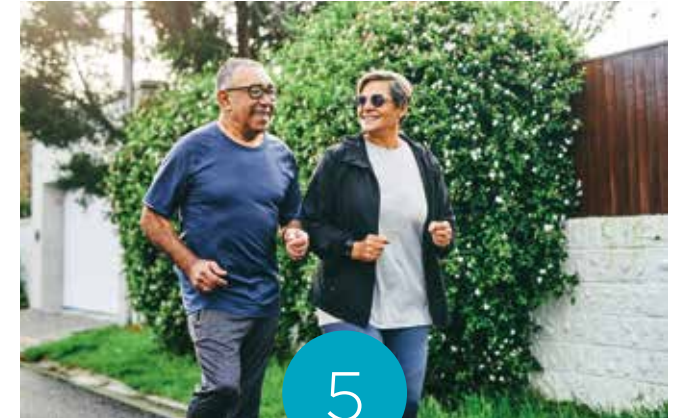


3

Consider your diet

Research has shown that limiting simple carbohydrates and sugars and adding protein to your diet can help improve concentration. A high-protein diet consists of beans, cheese, eggs, lean meat and nuts. These foods are good for your brain, therefore can be good for ADHD. These foods are also great for supporting a healthy smile — a win-win!

Start your day with a healthy breakfast that's high in protein. Not only will this help boost your energy for the day, but it can also help you stay alert and focused.



5

Get in exercise

Exercise is good for your body from head to toe. Not only does it build muscle, it also releases chemicals in the brain like dopamine, which can help clear the mind and focus attention. Exercising regularly is beneficial for your oral health, too. Taking even just a 15-minute walk can help curb sugar cravings and support a healthy immune system, which is great for protecting your smile.

Those with ADHD tend to have less dopamine in their brains than their neurotypical counterparts. Exercise is a way to boost the amount of dopamine naturally. ■



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