

# grin!®



*Relax, breathe deep  
and improve your teeth*

Combating the  
opioid crisis

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What's your  
brushing style?

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Taking care as  
you grow older

in this issue of  
**grin!**

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



View web-exclusive content, videos and more!

WELLNESS



How children with clefts can thrive

Thousands of babies are born each year with a cleft palate or cleft lip. But with treatment, most will live healthy lives. Find out more about this common condition.

LIFESTYLE



Oral health tips for teens

The teenage years tend to be busy running around to games, practices and other activities. Here's how to help your teen take care of their teeth (and braces) during this hectic time.

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



## On topic with Dr. Dill

### Combating the opioid crisis

If you have a dental emergency or any kind of oral surgery, your dentist may prescribe medicine to help manage pain.

But today, misuse of certain types of prescription painkillers known as opioids — including hydrocodone, oxycodone, morphine and codeine — is a national public health crisis. Taking opioids in a way other than prescribed can lead to addiction, overdose or even death. Each day, more than 130 Americans die from an opioid overdose.<sup>1</sup>

The dental community — working hand in hand with medical, law enforcement and education communities — is helping combat this problem to prevent opioid misuse.

#### How to do your part

- Ask your dentist about over-the-counter medications such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen to see if they could be just as effective for managing your pain.
- Confirm the number of days you should take the painkillers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends taking prescription opioids for no more than seven days, and in most cases, no more than three days.
- Make sure opioids are never prescribed to your small children.
- Know that painkillers may be addictive and talk through this with your dentist.
- Be aware of what to do with unused or expired pills. Your dentist can provide guidance on how to properly dispose of them.

Share your medical history with your dentist if you have a situation that requires prescription opioids for pain relief. Let your dentist know what other medications you are taking and if your family has a history of addiction. Ask questions. And properly dispose of any leftover pills as soon as possible. ■



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.

<sup>1</sup>National Institute on Drug Abuse

## Mouth-friendly recipe: Vegetarian pumpkin chili

Nothing beats comfort foods like a warm bowl of chili. This perfect-for-fall recipe is packed with pumpkin, which is a good source of two antioxidants — vitamins A and C — that help fight off infection and protect your smile. Toss in several other veggies that are great for your oral health to create this savory dish.

#### Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup carrots, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, cored and chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 can pumpkin puree (15 ounces)
- 1 can tomato sauce (8 ounces)
- 2 cans kidney beans, drained and rinsed (15 ounces each)
- 1 cup frozen corn kernels
- 1/2 cup vegetable broth

#### Directions:

- ① In a large pot, warm olive oil over medium heat.
- ② Put onion and salt into pot. Sauté until onion is softened.
- ③ Add carrots, red bell pepper and garlic. Continue sautéing for 2 minutes.
- ④ Combine chili powder, cumin, smoked paprika, oregano and tomato paste with other ingredients in pot. Stir until all veggies are coated and cook for 2 more minutes.
- ⑤ Add pumpkin puree, tomato sauce, kidney beans, corn and vegetable broth. Stir to combine.
- ⑥ Bring chili to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 10 to 20 minutes.
- ⑦ Taste and add more salt or spices if needed.
- ⑧ Try topping with avocado, cilantro, sour cream or even crushed red pepper. Enjoy! ■

**Beans**  
are high in antioxidants and vitamin B that boost immunity and combat inflammation.

**Red bell peppers**  
are loaded with vitamin C, which is essential for healthy gums.

**Carrots**  
are rich in fiber and vitamin A for strong teeth and bones.

# History of oral health: The secrets our teeth reveal

Dental records have provided investigators with key evidence over the years to help identify people in crimes. Here are some famous cases where teeth solved a mystery.

A.D. 66

A black tooth identified the wife of Roman emperor Nero. She was killed by soldiers who were instructed to provide proof that she was dead.



1893

After assassinating President Abraham Lincoln in 1865, John Wilkes Booth hid until being shot by the U.S. Cavalry. Although some believed Booth survived, his unusual jaw formation confirmed his identity when his body was exhumed 28 years later.

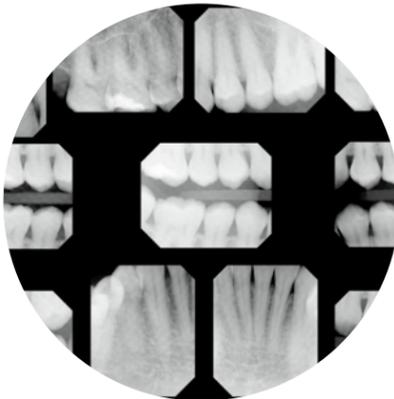
1775

Paul Revere used teeth and dental work, such as dentures, to identify fallen soldiers in the American Revolution. He became known as the nation's first forensic dentist.



1954

When a Texas grocery store was burglarized, investigators found a partially eaten piece of cheese. This bite mark was used as evidence against the person accused in the Doyle v. State of Texas trial.



Today

Dental records continue to be used in criminal investigations, plane crashes and natural disasters. They sometimes even provide breaks in cold cases.

Treatment and X-rays you receive as part of your dental benefits coverage create a record that's unique to you. ■



## Readers ask, we answer

*Dustin asks:*  
"Should I brush before or after breakfast?"

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, Dustin! It depends on what your breakfast looks like. If your breakfast consists of food and drinks containing lots of sugar or carbs, like sugary cereals and apple juice, brushing after a meal can help reduce bacteria in your mouth and prevent tooth decay.

But if you're planning to eat or drink something acidic — such as grapefruit, pineapple, orange juice or even coffee — it's better to brush before breakfast.

That's because acid attacks your teeth after you eat, weakening your tooth enamel. It takes about 30 to 45 minutes for saliva to remineralize and restore the enamel to its previous state. Brushing too soon can damage your teeth while your enamel is temporarily weakened. Instead of brushing after breakfast, consider swishing with water to help wash away acids.

If brushing after breakfast is already your jam, wait at least a half hour after eating to prevent damage to your teeth.

The most important thing is to remember to brush every morning for two full minutes as part of your daily routine. This removes bacteria, acid and plaque that build up in your mouth overnight. Plus, it helps get rid of morning breath! ■

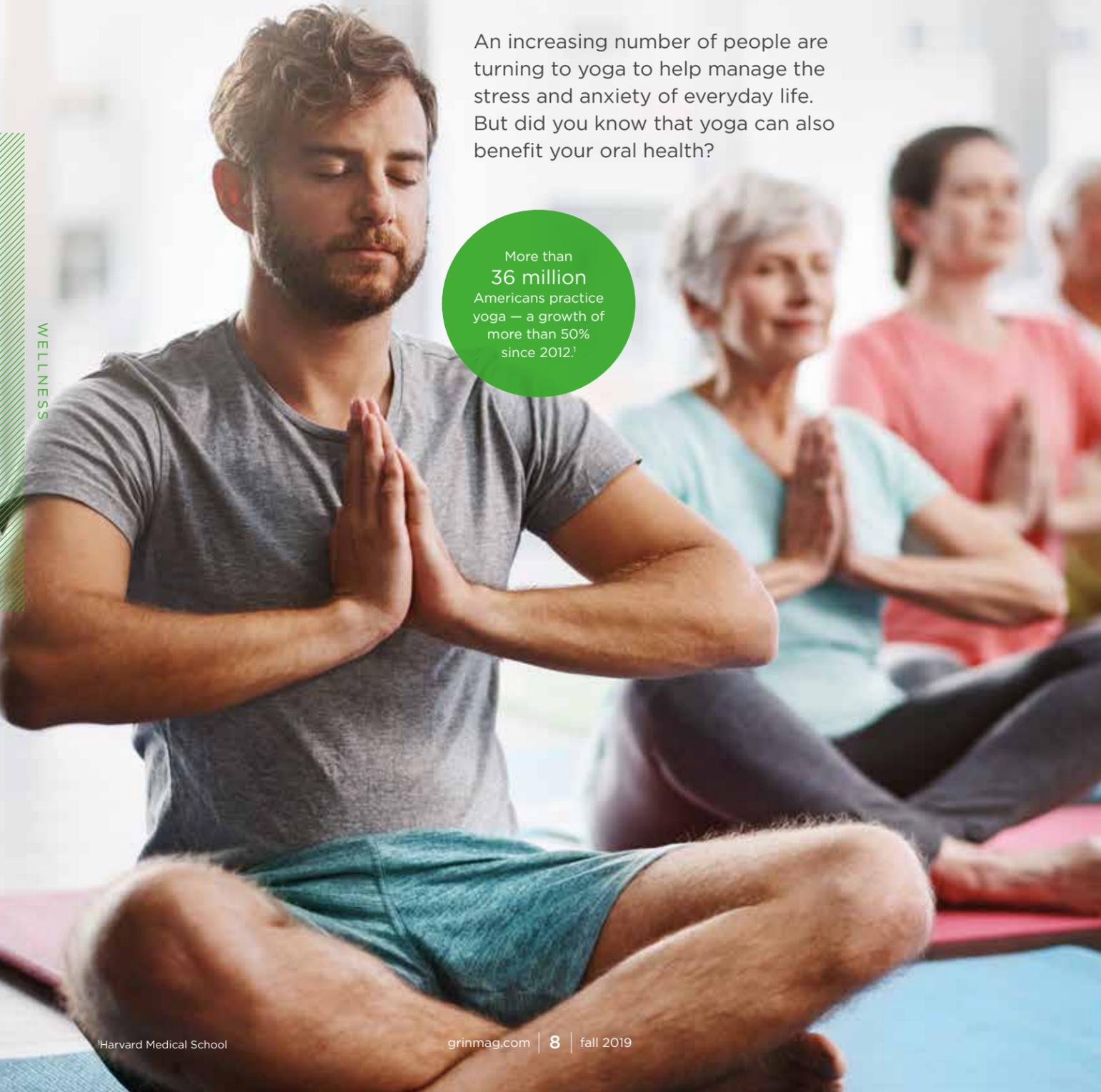
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# Relax, breathe deep and improve your teeth

An increasing number of people are turning to yoga to help manage the stress and anxiety of everyday life. But did you know that yoga can also benefit your oral health?

More than  
**36 million**  
Americans practice  
yoga — a growth of  
more than 50%  
since 2012.<sup>1</sup>

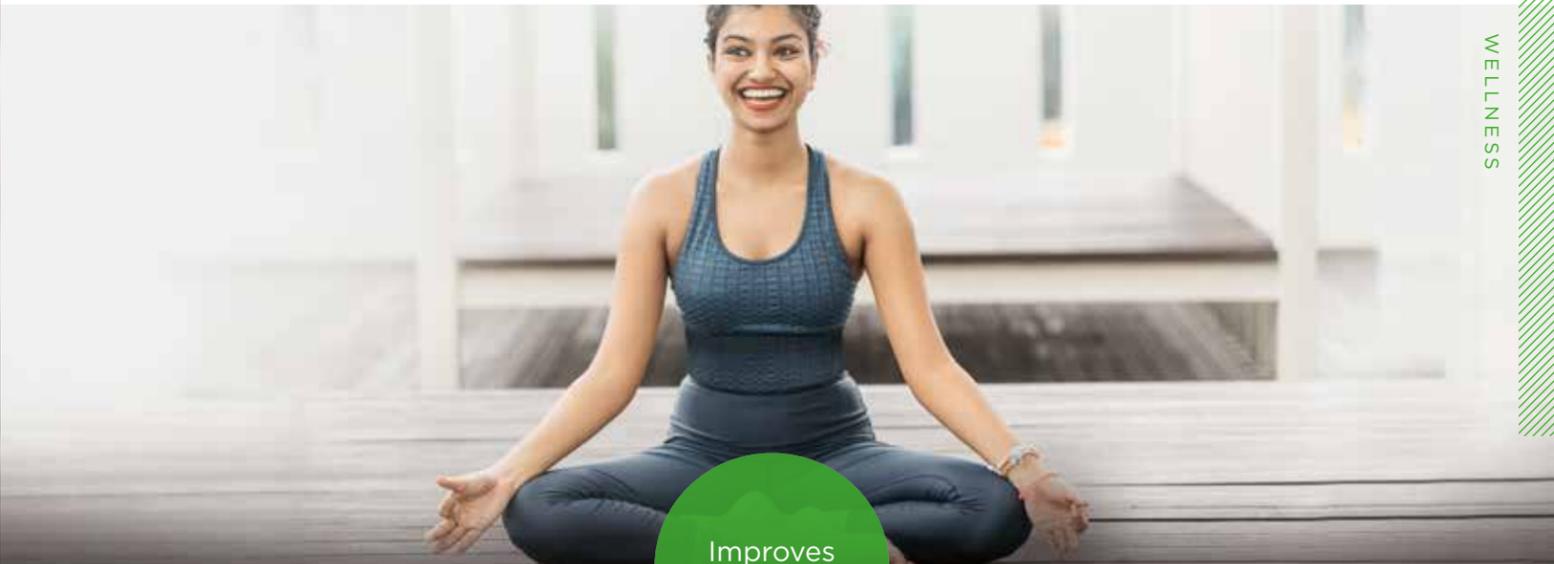
WELLNESS



Reduces  
stress

Stress can contribute to poor oral health. It can lead to teeth grinding (bruxism), canker sores and gum disease. Those who are stressed will sometimes grab unhealthy foods, neglect their teeth and gums, put off dental visits, smoke or drink excessively. This can increase the likelihood of gum disease. Yoga can help your mind and body better cope with stress and anxiety, and improve your overall well-being. Lowering your stress levels can also reduce inflammation, which, in turn, may reduce your risk of gum disease.

WELLNESS



Improves  
posture

It's easy to develop poor posture doing everyday tasks such as driving or sitting at a desk. Slouching can take a surprising toll on your oral health. It pushes your lower jaw forward, which can cause you to develop a misaligned bite and jaw pain. Poor posture can also place strain and tension on your teeth, leading to possible tooth damage. Yoga — which promotes greater awareness of your thoughts, feelings and body — can help get your body back into alignment. It can reduce the strain and tension on your teeth, as well as jaw pain, by promoting better posture. >

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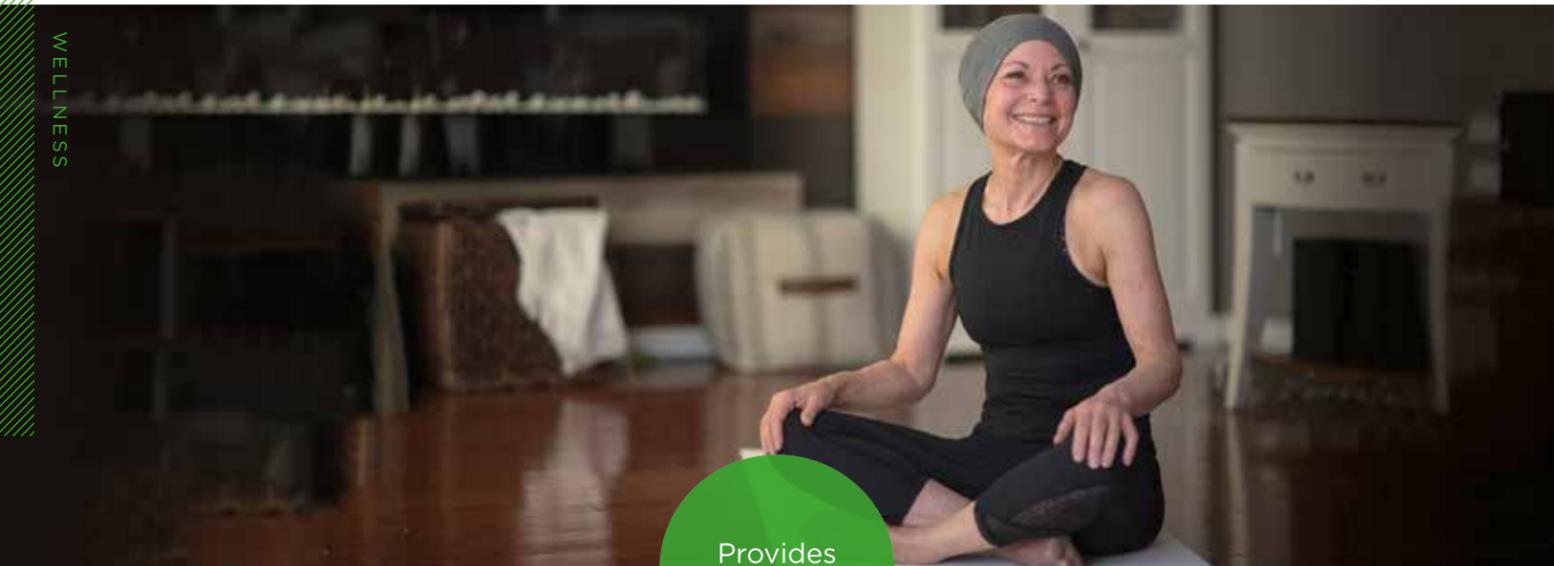


Stimulates saliva

Continued from page 9

Practicing yoga helps with the production of saliva — which plays a key role in good oral health. Saliva shields against gum disease and tooth decay by washing away leftover food particles that feed bacteria. When eating something acidic damages your enamel, saliva repairs that enamel with calcium, phosphorus, fluoride and other minerals. Saliva also helps kill germs and prevent bad breath.

WELLNESS



Provides relief

Some cancer patients say yoga has provided relief to their bodies and improved their quality of life. While not a medical substitute, yoga is considered a “complementary therapy” because it helps reduce anxiety, fatigue and depression.

Give yoga a try. Beyond helping your overall well-being, you may notice some great improvements to your oral health. ■

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## Two-word answers



Q:

Does biting my nails harm my health?

A:

It could.

You may find nibbling on your nails comforting, but it can cause a host of problems for your mouth and your body.

### It can damage your teeth and gums.

Biting your nails — as well as chewing on pencils or crunching on ice — increases your risk of chipping, cracking or breaking your teeth. It makes it more likely that you’ll develop bruxism, where you unintentionally grind and clench your teeth. That can lead to facial pain, headaches, teeth sensitivity and more. It isn’t just your teeth. Sharp or jagged fingernails can damage your gums by causing them to tear.

### It can make you sick.

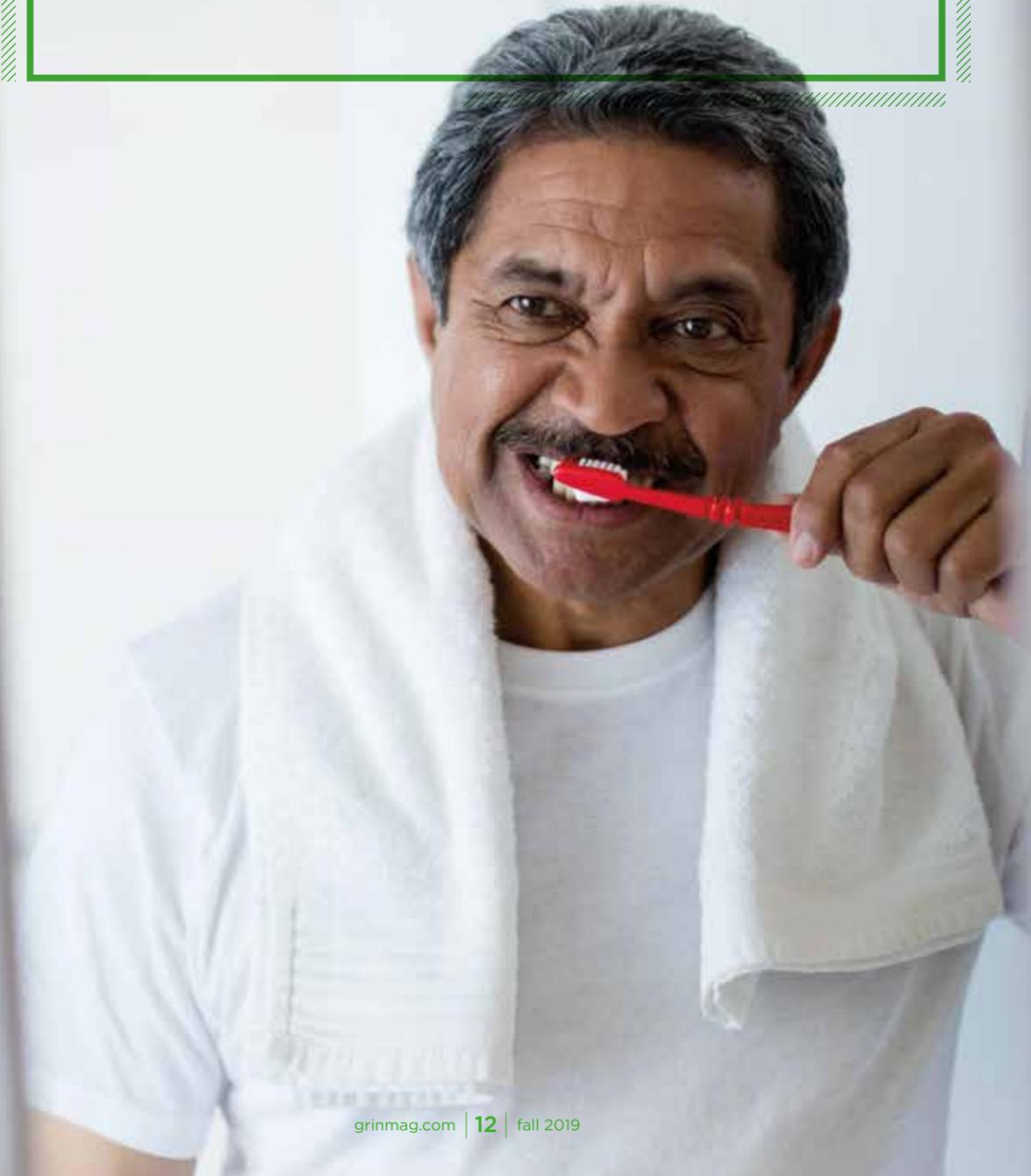
Your hands, fingers and nails are full of germs. Putting them in your mouth increases your chance of illness, no matter how hard you try to keep your hands clean. Nail biting can spread bacteria from your body to your mouth, and into your bloodstream. So avoid getting sick and spreading germs by keeping your hands out of your mouth.

WELLNESS

### How to break the habit

- **Cut your nails short**, so you won’t have much to bite. File any ragged edges to decrease the temptation to chew on them.
- **Find other ways to keep busy** with your hands and mouth. Try squeezing a stress ball, making a fist or chewing on some sugar-free gum with xylitol.
- **Coat your nails with an over-the-counter product** that has a bitter taste meant to stop nail biting.
- **Get a manicure.** You won’t want to ruin how good your nails look!
- **Check with your dentist** for additional ways to break the habit. ■

# Taking care AS YOU GROW OLDER



There's no question that America's population is aging. The number of people 65 and older is expected to grow to more than 98 million by 2060, or about 24% of the population.<sup>1</sup> Here are a few ways to keep your mouth and body healthy as you age.



### Keep brushing and flossing.

Almost all of your peers have had cavities, and about 1 in 5 have not sought treatment.<sup>2</sup> To help prevent cavities, continue brushing your teeth twice a day and flossing daily. Fluoride also helps. Drink fluoridated water — usually found right from the tap — and brush with fluoride toothpaste. As another option, ask your dentist about fluoride rinses and gels. Studies show that those who use fluoride regularly have fewer cavities. >

You're at high risk of tooth decay — it's the

**#1 CHRONIC DISEASE**

for those 65 and older.

<sup>1</sup>Population Reference Bureau analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data  
<sup>2</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Continued from page 13



### Continue seeing the dentist.

About 1 in 4 adults ages 65 and older haven't seen a dentist in five years.<sup>3</sup> But regular dental visits are important, even if you have dentures. That's because dentists help protect both our oral and overall health. At a routine visit, your dentist can potentially identify signs of more than 120 diseases, including oral cancer, heart disease and diabetes. So either make use of the dental benefits you already have (preventive checkups are often covered 100%), or seek one of several affordable options for dental care available at [deltadental.com](http://deltadental.com).

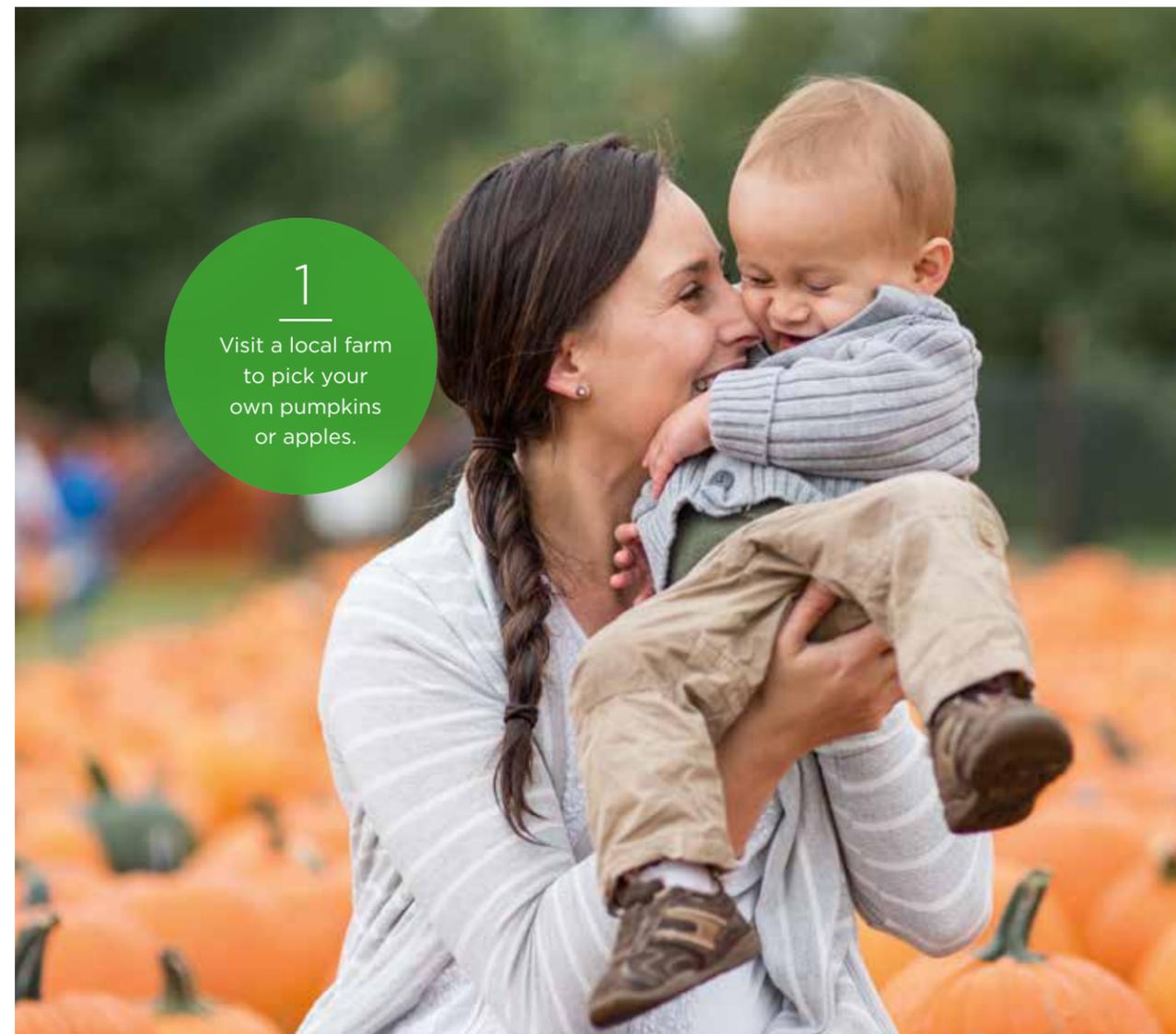


### Drink water throughout the day.

As you get older, you're more likely to experience dry mouth. That means less saliva — one of your body's key weapons in defending against gum disease and tooth decay by washing away food particles and acid. Dry mouth can be a side effect of certain medications or can stem from other conditions such as diabetes. About 30% of people older than 65 and 40% of people over 80 suffer from dry mouth.<sup>4</sup> Drinking water throughout the day can help relieve this condition. You should also limit consumption of alcohol and drinks that have a lot of sugar or caffeine. ■

<sup>3</sup>The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey  
<sup>4</sup>American Dental Association

# Your fall smile list



1

Visit a local farm to pick your own pumpkins or apples.

- ② Take a scenic drive to see the beautiful fall foliage.
- ③ Tell someone you love how thankful you are for them.
- ④ Get your creative juices flowing by making a homemade Halloween costume.
- ⑤ Watch some of your favorite spooky movies.
- ⑥ Work your way through a corn maze and see who can finish first.
- ⑦ Host a potluck or game night with friends you haven't seen in a while.
- ⑧ Whip up a tasty fall meal from scratch. Try our pumpkin chili recipe on page 5.
- ⑨ Show some school spirit and cheer on your favorite team.
- ⑩ Try something new — like yoga! Learn about its benefits on pages 8-10. ■



## Dental trend spotlight: Are e-cigarettes safe?

The use of e-cigarettes is skyrocketing. Sales by one manufacturer grew 641% from 2.2 million devices in 2016 to 16.2 million devices in 2017.<sup>1</sup>

Vaping is especially popular among youth — so much so that U.S. health officials are calling it an epidemic. Over 3 million high school students used e-cigarettes in 2018 — a 78% increase from 2017.<sup>2</sup> Many teens who smoke have switched to e-cigarettes, believing they are a healthier alternative. More than twice as many teens are now using e-cigarettes rather than cigarettes.

But research has found that vaping may be equally as harmful and can damage cells in your mouth. In fact, the use of e-cigarettes can lead to numerous oral health problems, including gum disease, tooth loss and oral cancer.

### Health risks of e-cigarettes

- Most contain nicotine, which is highly addictive and **can impair brain development in adolescents.**
- Some brands include formaldehyde, which **can cause cancer.**
- E-cigarettes are offered in a variety of candy and fruit flavors, making them appealing to youth. Some of these are made with a chemical called diacetyl, which tastes like butter but **can cause lung disease or “popcorn lung.”**

**Our verdict:** Avoid using e-cigarettes, and talk to your kids about the potential dangers. The use of any tobacco product, including e-cigarettes, is harmful to your oral and overall health. ■

<sup>1,2</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



## Are braces in my future?

Braces can cost a lot of money and can contribute to a few awkward years. But they are well worth the investment.

Orthodontics can help correct teeth that are crooked, crowded or misaligned. These issues can stem naturally from the jaw simply not having enough room for all of the teeth. Or they can develop from thumb-sucking, mouth breathing or poor nutrition. If these problems are not corrected, they can cause issues with eating and talking. They can also make taking care of teeth more challenging, which can lead to tooth decay and gum disease.

Your dentist and orthodontist are uniquely qualified to help you fix these problems. They will also monitor your progress and help you avoid potentially costly complications.

Check with your dentist on whether you or your child need braces — and what’s the best timing. It’s usually better to make dental corrections early, while children are still growing and it’s easier for their teeth and bones to move. A first visit to the orthodontist is recommended by age 7. Many families wait until children have most of their permanent teeth, around the ages of 10 to 14, before getting braces. But this can vary from person to person.

An orthodontist can recommend which type of braces is best for you or your child. Here are four types of braces available:

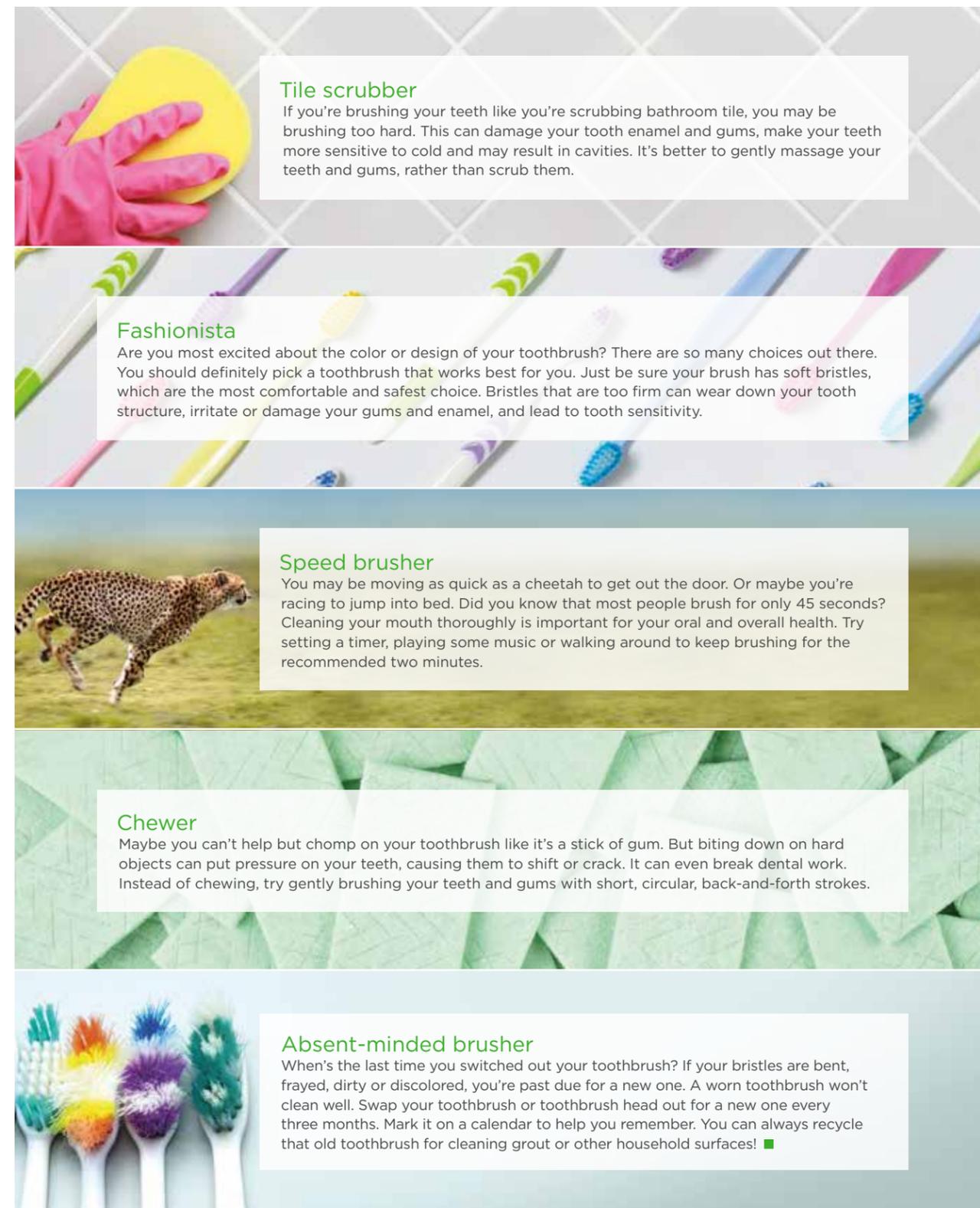
- **Traditional metal braces** can be customized with different colored bands.
- **Clear or tooth-colored ceramic braces** may also include clear wires.
- **Lingual braces** are placed on the back of the teeth.
- **Clear custom-made plastic aligners** are nearly invisible and look like mouth guards.

If your dentist recommends braces, check with your dental plan to see if orthodontic treatment is covered.

Sometimes coverage is limited to children under 18. Other plans have waiting periods or a maximum amount that will be covered. Be sure to check if there are any types of braces that aren’t included and if you need to see an orthodontist in your dental plan’s network. ■

# What's *your* brushing style?

Everyone has a unique toothbrushing style. Check out these five types of brushers and see if any of them sound like you. Then try our recommendations for better ways to brush and protect your smile.





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