

# grin!®

6

**can't-miss essentials**  
for summer camp

Graduate to your own dental plan

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5 secrets to whole-body wellness

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What color should my teeth be?

in this issue of  
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LIFESTYLE



12

**6 can't-miss essentials for summer camp**

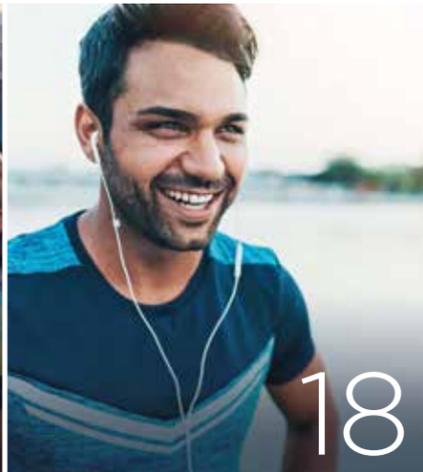
How can you protect your kids even when they're away from home? See what to pack to keep their smiles healthy at summer camp.

**5 Mouth-friendly recipe:**  
Mini eggplant pizzas

**7 Readers ask, we answer:**  
Is chewing gum bad for my teeth?

**15 Your summer smile list:**  
10 to-do's that will make you grin

WELLNESS



18

**5 secrets to whole-body wellness**

Stay healthy from head to toe. Follow these tips to keep your teeth and body strong this summer.

**4 On topic with Dr. Dill:**  
A window into your overall health

**6 History of oral health:**  
Did our ancestors care about bad breath?

**11 Two-word answers:**  
Gum disease and Alzheimer's

DENTAL BENEFITS



8

**What color should my teeth be?**

Your teeth may be a shade of white, gray, yellow or brown. Find out why and what can contribute to discoloring.

**16 Dental trend spotlight:**  
Can a banana peel really whiten your teeth?

**17 Graduate to your own dental plan**

**grin!** more

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



View web-exclusive content, videos and more!

WELLNESS

LIFESTYLE



**Are you damaging your children's smiles with too much toothpaste?**

Brushing twice a day is a key part of preventing cavities, but too much toothpaste can harm children's teeth. Find out how much is too much.



**How to keep smiling through all of life's changes**

Graduation, new job, starting a family. All these changes can be stressful for young adults. Follow these tips to keep your mouth and body healthy through important milestones.

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



## On topic with Dr. Dill

### A window into your overall health

Taking care of your teeth and gums isn't just good for your mouth. It's a key part of your overall health and well-being.

An increasing number of studies show an association between periodontal (gum) disease and other health conditions ranging from heart and lung disease to Alzheimer's, diabetes, pneumonia, osteoporosis, arthritis, cancer and premature labor. In fact, research shows that people with gum disease are nearly twice as likely to have heart disease, according to the American Academy of Periodontology.

#### Tips to keep your mouth and body healthy

- Don't smoke.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Brush twice a day.
- Remember to floss daily.
- Schedule regular visits with your dentist.

Your gums can become infected by bacteria if you don't properly brush and floss your teeth or when you miss regular dental visits. This allows plaque and tartar to build up, which can lead to tooth decay and gum disease. Other risk factors for gum disease include smoking, diabetes, an unhealthy diet and stress.

Gum disease can bring more than pain to your mouth. If left untreated, it can lead to issues with your whole body. Your dentist can also potentially identify signs in your mouth of more than 120 systemic diseases, including heart disease and diabetes.

While more research is needed, it's clear that keeping your mouth healthy is essential to maintaining good overall health. ■



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.

## Mouth-friendly recipe: Mini eggplant pizzas

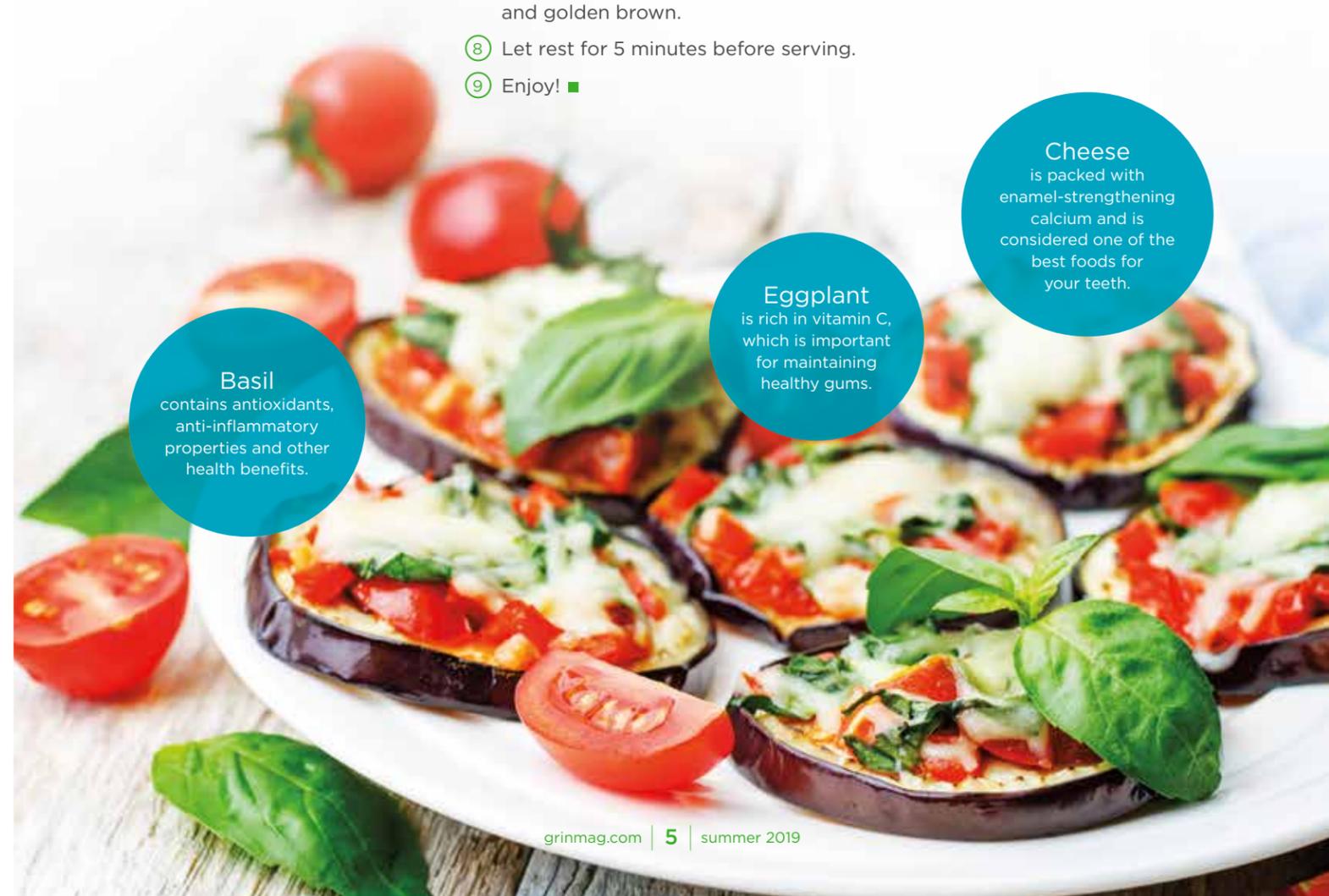
Trading carbs for veggie alternatives is all the rage these days. Using eggplant slices in place of ordinary pizza dough not only reduces calories, but it's also better for your smile. That's because the starch in regular crust can transform into a gummy paste, get stuck in your teeth and break down into sugar.

#### Ingredients:

- Olive oil cooking spray
- 1 large eggplant
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ cup marinara sauce (look for one low in sugar)
- 10 large basil leaves
- ½ cup shredded mozzarella

#### Directions:

- ① Preheat oven to 500 F. Line a baking sheet with foil and spray with cooking spray.
- ② Slice eggplant into ½-inch-thick rounds. Spray eggplant rounds with olive oil spray and place onto prepared baking sheet.
- ③ Sprinkle with kosher salt, black pepper and garlic powder.
- ④ Bake eggplant rounds for 10 minutes. Remove from oven, flip eggplant rounds over, spray with more olive oil and bake for 10 more minutes.
- ⑤ Remove pan from oven and switch oven to broil.
- ⑥ With a spoon, spread marinara sauce on each eggplant round. Top with a basil leaf and sprinkle with cheese.
- ⑦ Return pan to oven. Broil for 2 to 3 minutes or until the cheese is melted and golden brown.
- ⑧ Let rest for 5 minutes before serving.
- ⑨ Enjoy! ■



**Basil**  
contains antioxidants, anti-inflammatory properties and other health benefits.

**Eggplant**  
is rich in vitamin C, which is important for maintaining healthy gums.

**Cheese**  
is packed with enamel-strengthening calcium and is considered one of the best foods for your teeth.

# History of oral health: Did our ancestors care about bad breath?

Bad breath is a problem that's been around for centuries. The cause remains the same: sulfur-producing bacteria that feed on food stuck in the mouth.

## Ancient times

To tackle the problem, those in the medieval Arab empire chewed on twigs. Ancient Egyptians made mints and toothpaste with frankincense, myrrh and natron (also used for embalming mummies).



## 1800s

Tins of breath fresheners called "cachous" (kuh-shoo) - made from ingredients such as musk, violet essence, rose essence, licorice and cinnamon oil - became popular in Europe and the U.S.



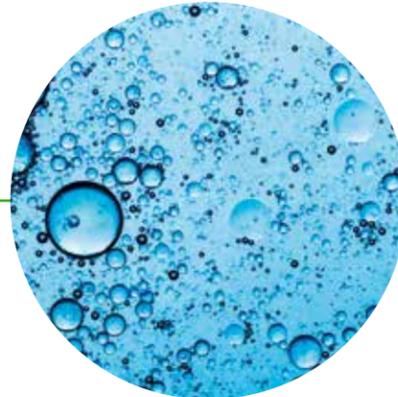
## 15th Century

The Chinese were the first to try brushing teeth to fight bad breath by using toothbrushes with bristles made of hog's hair.



## 1865

English surgeon Joseph Lister developed an antiseptic to kill bacteria during surgery. The idea later inspired Dr. Joseph Lawrence to create his own formula called Listerine. For decades, the liquid was used to clean feet, scrub floors and more before being used to fight bad breath.



Banish bad breath by maintaining a good oral health routine. If the problem persists, chat with your dentist. It may be a sign of gum disease, dry mouth, diabetes, sinus and digestive problems, or liver and kidney disease. ■



## Readers ask, we answer

Ava asks:  
"Is chewing gum bad for my teeth?"

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, Ava! It really depends on whether the gum has sugar in it. When that sweet tooth kicks in, it's always better to choose a sugar-free gum (one with xylitol is best!) rather than sugary bubble gum. That's because bacteria can transform sugar in your mouth into acids that destroy enamel and cause cavities.

But sugar-free gum can be good for your teeth. It increases the flow of saliva in your mouth, which helps wash away food and neutralizes acids produced by bacteria. Saliva also has calcium and phosphate to strengthen your enamel and reduce your risk of cavities.

Studies show that chewing sugar-free gum for 20 minutes after meals and snacks can help protect your teeth from tooth decay. One study found that gum sweetened with xylitol, a naturally occurring sugar found in fruits and vegetables, reduces the number of cavity-causing bacteria in your mouth by up to 75%. This can be great for times when it isn't convenient to brush your teeth after eating and drinking. It can also help temporarily prevent or relieve bad breath.

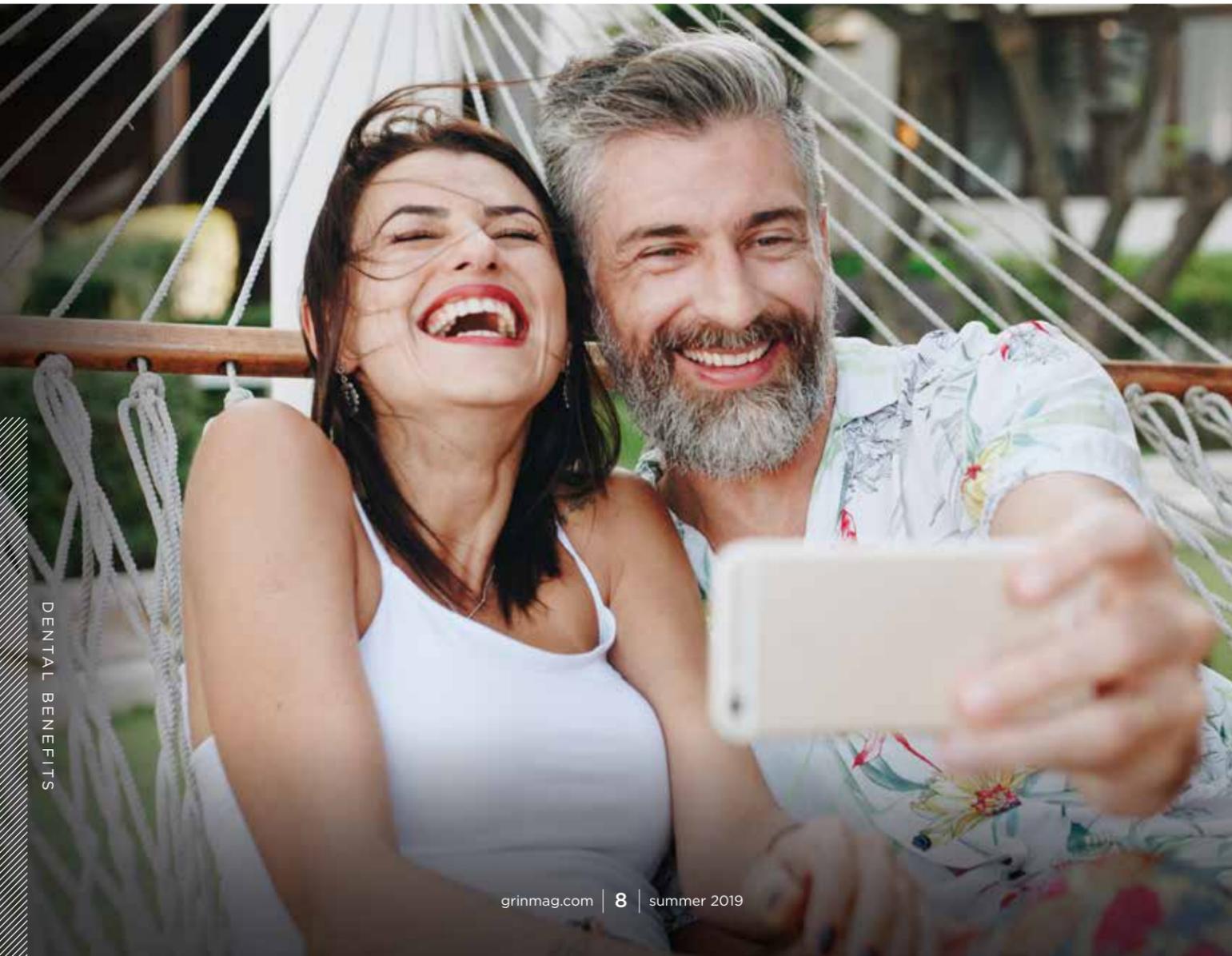
News about the benefits of sugar-free gum has increased demand and sales of the product. The global market for chewing gum is expected to generate \$23 billion in revenue by 2020,<sup>1</sup> mostly because of the oral and dental health benefits of sugar-free gum.

So before you grab a stick of gum, make sure to check the label to see that it's sugar-free. While chewing gum should not replace brushing and flossing, it could help prevent tooth decay. ■

<sup>1</sup>"Global Chewing Gum Market 2016-2020," Technavio, <https://www.technavio.com/report/global-food-global-chewing-gum-market-2016-2020>

# What **color** should my teeth be?

Many people strive to have pearly whites. But did you know that teeth naturally darken with age? Dentin, the inner hard part and main portion of your teeth, is mostly responsible for the color of your teeth — whether they're white, off-white, gray or yellowish. The color of teeth varies between people and even from tooth to tooth of the same person.



Baby teeth, also called primary teeth, are typically whiter than permanent teeth because they are more calcified. In baby teeth, the dentin that makes up the main portion of the tooth structure is very light yellow — almost white — so it doesn't show as much through the translucent white enamel, the thin outer covering of the tooth.



Permanent teeth are naturally darker than primary teeth. The yellow dentin darkens with age and takes up more tooth structure than in baby teeth. That means the dentin is more likely to be visible through the translucent blueish-white enamel. The darker the dentin, the yellower your teeth.



Over the years, teeth become stained by food and drink. Coffee, tea, colas and red wine have intense color pigments that attach to your enamel. Yellow teeth can also be caused by aging. Or they may just be dirty, as plaque buildup often has a yellowish color. Proper brushing, flossing and regular visits to the dentist can remove this plaque, but over the long term, plaque can cause a permanent stain.



A brown color is a more advanced version of yellow stains. Smoking or chewing tobacco can stain the teeth, causing them to go from yellow to brown to dark brown. Other culprits of not-so-bright teeth are age, trauma, medication or genetics. Be careful: Brown spots on your teeth can be a sign of tooth decay stemming from snacking on too many sugary and starchy foods. >

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## Teeth whitening

Continued from page 9

If you choose to start a whitening routine, check with your dentist about options. Your dentist will be able to tell you which method will work best — and is the safest — for you. Tooth whitening can cause tooth and gum sensitivity, so dentists may discourage whitening if you have sensitive teeth. Whitening also won't work on crowns and fillings, teeth stained by antibiotics, or gray teeth.

Whitening procedures at the dental office are not typically covered under dental plans. ■

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## Two-word answers



**Q:**  
Is there a link between gum disease and Alzheimer's?

**A:**  
It's possible.

A study published this year in the journal *Science Advances* further supports the possible association between periodontal (gum) disease and Alzheimer's disease. The disorder attacks the brain's cells over time, causing loss of memory, language and thinking skills. It's one of the top 10 causes of death in the United States.

Researchers comparing the brain tissue of people with and without Alzheimer's disease found higher levels of one of the bacteria that causes gum disease, called *Porphyromonas gingivalis* (*P. gingivalis*), and the toxic enzyme it secretes, called gingipains, in the brains of people with Alzheimer's.

But some researchers are more cautious about the findings and note that they are not conclusive. They say that, while the study has some notable findings, more research is needed to determine the cause and effect relationship.

Up to 80% of American adults have some form of gum disease, according to the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. Gum disease is the result of bacteria causing a sticky buildup of plaque on teeth and infecting tissues surrounding them when not cleaned properly.

The latest study reaffirms the important role gum health plays in overall wellness. Gum disease can be prevented with a healthy lifestyle — brushing twice a day, flossing daily, not smoking or using tobacco products, avoiding sugary snacks and drinks, and visiting the dentist regularly.

Managing gum disease is especially important in older adults or those who have an increased risk of dementia. ■

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6

## can't-miss essentials for summer camp

It's time for summer fun! As kids go off to camp, it's important they pack everything they will need for protection from the elements. Here are some must-haves to remember.



### Basic toiletries

Don't forget a toothbrush, toothpaste and floss to get those camp foods out of their teeth. Remind your kids to keep brushing and flossing each day, even when they're away from home. Pack some mouthwash with fluoride as well, which can keep their breath minty fresh and help protect against tooth decay.



### Outdoor protection

Being out in the sun provides exposure to vitamin D. That's great for overall and oral health because it helps absorb calcium, which strengthens bones and teeth. But be sure to pack lots of sunscreen. Did you know that lips are also vulnerable to sunburns? To protect your children's smiles, make sure they use lip balm with SPF before spending time in the sun. And don't forget the bug spray and anti-itch cream.



### Active equipment

Provide your kids with a water bottle to stay hydrated. Water will help cleanse their mouths with every sip, which can help prevent cavities. It also doesn't contain the extra sugar found in soda, juice and sports drinks. Don't forget to pack a mouth guard for camp activities like baseball or basketball. It can help prevent broken teeth and mouth injuries. >

Continued from page 13

### Healthy snacks

While the kids may be indulging in some treats, avoid sending them to camp with extra sugary sweets. Instead, pack some healthy apples and almonds. Sugar-free gum with xylitol can also help clean your kids' teeth at times of the day when they can't get to their toothbrushes.



### Personal needs

Do your children wear retainers? Remind them to bring theirs to camp, along with a storage case for mealtime, and any other special items your children may need while away from home.



### Evening and emergency supplies

A flashlight and batteries will help your children find their way at night without crashing into someone and causing a possible injury to your children's bodies or teeth. Send them to camp with some emergency phone numbers and a copy of their dental benefits cards in case something does happen while they're away. ■

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## Your summer smile list



1

Cool off by taking a swim — or dipping your feet in the wading pool.

- ② Watch the summer sunset in your favorite spot.
- ③ Travel to a place you've never been.
- ④ Dine outside with family and friends. Try our mini eggplant pizzas featured on page 5.
- ⑤ Enjoy an outdoor concert. Don't forget to pack a mouth-friendly snack.
- ⑥ Build a sandcastle.
- ⑦ Start a new book under a shaded tree in the park.
- ⑧ Play in a summer sports league, just for fun. Be sure to wear a mouth guard.
- ⑨ Grab some gloves and tackle a service project with friends — like cleaning a stretch of land.
- ⑩ Go fishing at a nearby pond, lake or ocean. ■

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## Dental trend spotlight: Can a banana peel really whiten your teeth?

Teeth whitening is a multi-billion-dollar industry. In fact, Americans spent more than \$11 billion on teeth whitening in 2015, including more than \$1.4 billion on at-home products.

So when word spread that rubbing your teeth with the inside of a banana peel for two minutes can help whiten your teeth, it caught fire. Advocates of the home remedy say the potassium, magnesium and manganese in banana peels absorb into your teeth and whiten them.

Others suggest that lemon peels, strawberries or orange peels can be used as natural teeth whiteners.

But there aren't any studies or scientific evidence to back claims that fruit can whiten teeth. Experts say the effectiveness of using fruit peels as natural teeth whiteners simply doesn't match the hype.

Fruits are a great source of vitamins and minerals. But some fruits, such as lemons and oranges, are highly acidic and can damage your enamel.

Eating crunchy fruits, such as apples, increases saliva production and helps reduce the bacteria in your mouth that causes plaque. But while they may naturally wash away food particles, they don't necessarily whiten your teeth.

Talk with your dentist before trying any home remedies for tooth whitening. Your dentist will be able to outline the pros and cons to help you make an informed decision. Regular dental visits will also help remove plaque and tartar, and keep your smile healthy and bright. The good news is that most plans cover 100% of dental checkups.

**Our verdict: Stick with eating fruits for a nutritious snack, not a teeth-whitening hack. ■**



## Graduate to your own dental plan

If you recently graduated, you may soon need your own dental plan (or to at least start thinking about it!). Here's what you need to know about this time of change.

Federal law allows you to stay on your parents' health care plans until you're 26 years old. If you are under your parents' dental plan and are turning 26, make sure you don't have a lapse in coverage.

Emergencies such as tooth pain or a chipped tooth can happen to anyone — and major dental work like fillings or crowns can be costly. Dental coverage can help safeguard your mouth and your wallet. Not only will it help you stay healthy, it also gives you access to cost savings and tools to help you find a dentist or estimate out-of-pocket costs.

Skipping routine dental visits because of a lack of coverage could lead to problems such as gum disease and tooth decay. Eighty-two percent of adults ages 20 to 34 have cavities.<sup>1</sup> Preventive dental care including exams, cleanings and X-rays help catch dental issues early and are completely covered by most plans.

Identify the dental treatments you may need in the near future and determine a plan that best meets your needs and budget. Most employers will allow you to sign up for benefits when you start a new job, during open enrollment or after a qualifying life event like marriage. Ask your employer about the dental benefits your company offers. Your payments may even be automatically taken out of your paycheck, which could result in pre-tax savings.

If employer coverage is not an option, most Delta Dental companies offer plans for individuals with the same comprehensive benefits and access to the nationwide network. Some states also have a discount program called Delta Dental Patient Direct<sup>®</sup> that provides access to participating dentists at a discounted fee.\*

If you're moving somewhere new, be sure to find a dentist in your dental plan's network. Going out of network will likely mean paying higher out-of-pocket costs. Visit [deltadental.com](http://deltadental.com) or use our Delta Dental mobile app to search for a dentist or plan. ■

<sup>1</sup>National Center for Health Statistics, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db197.htm>

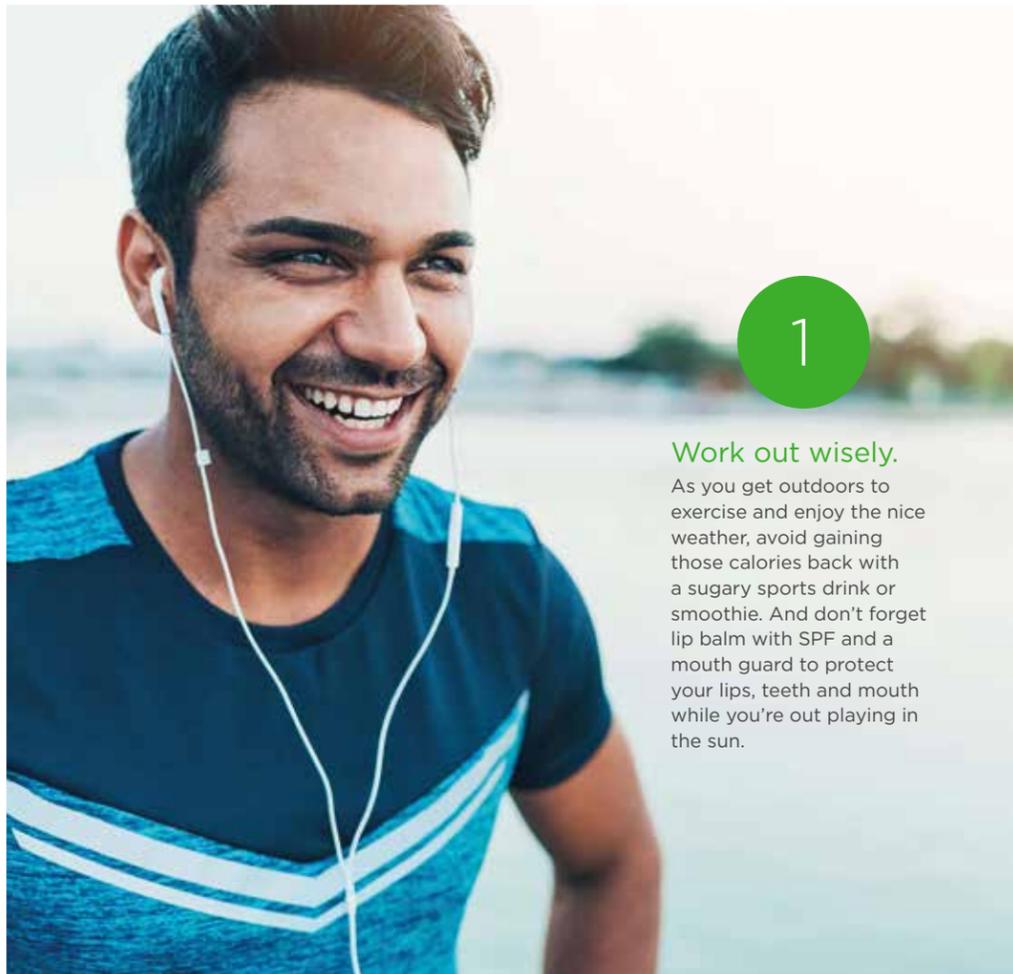
\*States with Delta Dental Patient Direct include Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio and Oklahoma.

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# 5

## secrets to whole-body wellness

It's a great time to be outdoors. Staying active by walking, riding a bike, swimming, traveling or catching a ball game can improve your overall health and well-being. But how does it influence your oral health? And what are you eating and drinking while you're on the go? Here are five tips that apply to both your fitness and smile:



1

### Work out wisely.

As you get outdoors to exercise and enjoy the nice weather, avoid gaining those calories back with a sugary sports drink or smoothie. And don't forget lip balm with SPF and a mouth guard to protect your lips, teeth and mouth while you're out playing in the sun.

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### Hydrate with water.

Reducing sugar is key to maintaining a healthy diet — and also key to preventing tooth decay. Need something after a warm day in the sun? Choose water instead of soda or other drinks with added sugar and calories. Your mouth and your waistline will thank you for it.

### Snack sensibly.

Reach for fresh fruit or a piece of sugar-free gum rather than chips, a cookie, cupcake or piece of pie. Chewing sugar-free gum sweetened with xylitol can also help clean your teeth and reduce your risk of cavities. See page 7 to find out how.



### Eat in moderation.

To maintain a healthy diet, it's important to watch portion sizes. But be sure not to overdo it. Reducing your food intake too much and not maintaining a balanced diet can deplete your body of necessary vitamins and minerals and have a major effect on your oral health. Malnutrition can lead to a weakened jawbone, softened enamel and deficient gums, making you vulnerable to gum disease.

### Vary your food groups.

Eating a variety of foods from all food groups is best for your overall health — and for healthy teeth and gums. Calcium-rich foods such as dark leafy greens, milk, yogurt and cheese help promote strong teeth and bones. Phosphorus found in lean meat, fish, eggs, nuts and beans is also great for teeth strength. Fruits and vegetables such as watermelon, peppers, broccoli and spinach are packed with vitamin C that help promote gum health. ■

WELLNESS



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A LAUGH  
IS A SMILE  
WITH THE  
SOUND  
TURNED UP.

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