

# grin!®

news, notes &  
entertainment to  
keep your smile  
healthy & happy

summer  
2017  
volume 6, issue 1



healthy  
**CAMPING**

**5** things that  
yellow teeth

race toward a  
healthy smile

your summer  
smile list



# smile

by alex



smile power™

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## table of contents

- 4 on topic with dr. kohn: how often should your child have dental x-rays?
- 5 mouth-friendly recipe: garlic-parmesan veggies
- 6 history of oral health: dental discoveries unearthed by archaeologists
- 7 readers ask, we answer: frozen vs. fresh produce
- 8 5 things that yellow teeth
- 9 two-word answers
- 14 appointment scheduling at your fingertips
- 15 dental trend spotlight: turmeric whitening
- 16 your summer smile list: 10 to-do's that will make you grin



10 feature article  
**RACE TOWARD**  
A HEALTHY SMILE



12 feature article  
**healthy CAMPING**

## on topic with dr. kohn

### how often should your child have dental x-rays?

X-rays are an important tool that allow dentists to see signs of disease or potential problems that are not visible to the naked eye – but they aren't necessary at every exam. All X-rays use radiation that can potentially cause damage. While each X-ray results in exposure to only a tiny dose of radiation, there is a cumulative effect over time. Studies have found that the long-term risks are greater for children who are still growing rapidly.

Even though the individual risk from a necessary X-ray exam is quite small when compared to the benefit of aiding accurate diagnosis or guiding a treatment, dentists are encouraged to follow the ALARA principle, which means "As Low As Reasonably Achievable." In other words, only order what is absolutely needed to make a diagnosis. Ideally, your dentist should adhere to the guidelines for dental radiographs established by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the American Dental Association (ADA).

Many people believe they should get as many X-rays as their dental plan covers, but for most children, and even adults, this annual X-ray exposure may be excessive and unnecessary. Don't let your benefits dictate your decision. Dental X-rays should only be ordered *after* your dentist has personally checked your child's teeth and determined the need for additional information. In general, the ADA and FDA have said children and adults at low risk for tooth decay and gum disease need X-rays less often, even as infrequently as every 36 months. Keep in mind that the frequency and number of X-rays needed is determined by multiple factors, including the child's development stage, current oral health and future risk for disease.

**If you have questions or concerns related to dental X-rays, don't hesitate to discuss them with your dentist.**



Meet Delta Dental's Vice President of Dental Science and Policy, Bill Kohn, DDS. Formerly the director of the Division of Oral Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Kohn has timely tips and valuable insights to share as our resident dental expert.



## mouth-friendly recipe: garlic-parmesan veggies

*Campfire food has evolved beyond hot dogs on sticks. You can prepare these foil packets before you hit the road, then cook them over the fire for a flavorful, healthy addition to your camping menu.*

### ingredients:

3 tablespoons olive oil	24 oz. broccoli florets
3 cloves garlic, minced	16 oz. baby potatoes, halved
1 tablespoon Italian seasoning	10 oz. baby carrots
1/4 teaspoon onion powder	1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan
Salt and pepper to taste	

### directions:

- 1 Whisk olive oil, garlic and spices together in a bowl.
- 2 Cut four sheets of foil, each about a foot long, and place equal amounts of veggies in the center of the foil sheets.
- 3 Fold up the sides of each foil packet, then drizzle the olive oil mixture over each one. Bring up long sides of foil so edges meet. Seal edges, making a 1/2-inch fold and fold again, allowing room for heat circulation. Fold ends to seal.
- 4 Toss foil packets in a plastic bag and store in a cooler, along with a bag of the grated Parmesan cheese, until you're ready to cook them over your campfire.
- 5 You'll know the packets are ready when veggies are soft and tender. Before serving, sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

# HISTORY OF ORAL HEALTH: dental discoveries unearthed by archaeologists

Teeth can tell you a lot about a person – even when they’ve been dead for thousands of years. Here are a few fascinating facts archaeologists have dug up about teeth.



The oldest fillings in the world are 13,000 years old. Made of a naturally occurring tar called bitumen, the fillings were found in two incisors discovered in northern Italy in the 1990s.

Ancient Romans of Pompeii had nearly perfect teeth thanks to healthy diets and a water supply that contained natural fluorine.



Vikings filed horizontal grooves across their teeth, possibly for beautification or social identification.



The oldest example of preserved plaque is more than 8 million years old. It belonged to an ancestor of orangutans.



Scientists have extracted DNA from fossilized plaque on 700-year-old teeth.



## readers ask, we answer

*Kristi asks:*

**“I know fruits and veggies are essential to good oral health, and I want to make sure I’m giving my family the best nutrition possible. Does it matter if I use fresh fruits and veggies or frozen?”**

Hi, Kristi! Whether it’s fresh or frozen, choose whatever is convenient for you. According to the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry, freezing can alter the nutritional composition of fruits and veggies, but sometimes it actually *improves* the vitamins and minerals: Frozen broccoli has more riboflavin, also known as vitamin B2, than fresh broccoli, and frozen corn, green beans and blueberries have more vitamin C than their counterparts in the fresh produce section. On the other hand, the freezing process can decrease the nutritional value of other elements. But the differences are so minor that it doesn’t really matter.

Overall, getting your daily servings of fruits and veggies is more important than what format they arrive in. So keep doing what you’re doing!



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.

# 5 things that YELLOW TEETH

Yellow is usually considered a happy color – sunshine, buttercups and daffodils are guaranteed to put smiles on most faces. When it comes to teeth, however, yellow isn't such a welcome hue. Even people who are diligent about their dental health can find themselves with some tooth discoloration. These five causes are some of the most common culprits.



1

## Age

Most teeth naturally yellow as we age because the outer layer of enamel wears away, revealing the yellowish dentin layer underneath.



2

## Genetics

Some people have brighter or thicker enamel due to DNA. Thicker enamel will take longer to wear down, which can make teeth appear whiter longer.



3

## Medications

Tetracycline antibiotics, commonly used to treat bacterial infections, can cause permanent tooth stains, especially in young children. Pregnant women who take tetracycline also risk staining their developing baby's permanent teeth. Additionally, some antihistamines, antipsychotic drugs and high blood pressure medications can cause enamel to yellow. Treatment may include switching to a different brand of medication – discuss a prescription change with your dentist and physician.



4

## Certain foods and drinks

Coffee, tea and red wine contain an ingredient called tannin, which causes color compounds to stick to enamel, leaving unwanted stains.



5

## Tobacco use

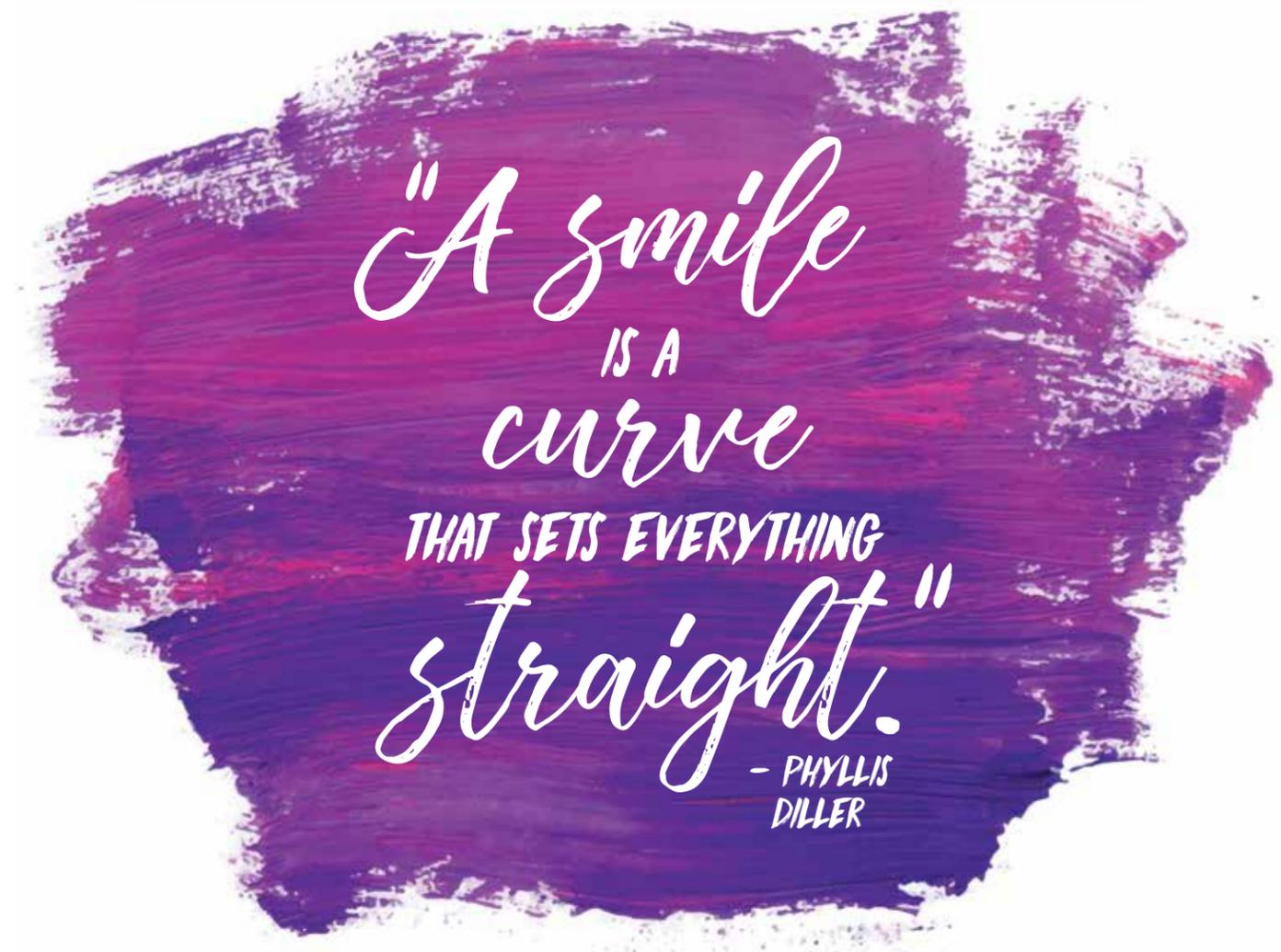
The nicotine and tar found in cigarettes, cigars and smokeless tobacco can make teeth yellow very quickly. Longtime users often find themselves with brown stains that are hard to remove.

**The good news:** Yellowed teeth usually respond well to whitening treatments. (Teeth with brown stains don't whiten as well, and gray-looking teeth often don't change at all.) However, the recommended treatment can vary depending on the cause of the discoloration. For example, in-office whitening treatments are recommended for thin enamel; over-the-counter whitening toothpastes typically won't work. **Talk to your dentist to create a customized whitening plan based on your personal needs.**

## TWO-WORD answers

**Q:** How many bristles are on a toothbrush?

**A:** About 2,500.





# RACE TOWARD A HEALTHY SMILE

*Exercise can be great for your lungs. It also strengthens muscles, helps prevent heart disease and obesity, builds endurance and even improves your mood. But it may not be so great for your teeth.*

According to the Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports, athletes who train frequently tend to have more cavities and tooth erosion than those who train or exercise less. Are they too tired to brush before bed or too busy training to floss daily? Maybe at times, but exhaustion isn't to blame for athletes' higher rate of tooth problems. Read up on two key causes – and how to combat them.

## **THE REASON: TRAINING DIET**

One cavity culprit is the high amount of carbohydrates endurance athletes tend to consume to keep energy levels up while training. This includes acidic, sugary sports drinks, gels and bars used while training and as part of carb replenishing right after a training session. Because all carbs break down into sugars, energy products can be just as harmful to teeth as eating candies and cookies. They lower the mouth's pH below the critical mark of 5.5, which is when teeth begin to dissolve or demineralize.

## **THE SOLUTION: DRINK PLAIN WATER, FLOSS AND BRUSH WITH FLUORIDE TOOTHPASTE**

If you consume sports gels, sports drinks or any other acidic products during or immediately after a workout, make sure that you also drink water. Not only will it help you stay hydrated, swishing it around your mouth will dilute the potentially harmful effects from the acid and sugar in your energy foods and drinks. Acidic drinks and snacks can actually soften or erode tooth enamel. Wait at least 30 minutes after consuming these products, then floss and brush with fluoride toothpaste to help remineralize tooth enamel.

## **THE REASON: HEAVY BREATHING**

There's also a factor that has nothing to do with what athletes consume. Rather, it's how they breathe. When athletes exert a lot of energy, they naturally breathe through their mouths to try to take in more air. It works, but it tends to dry out the mouth. Hard workouts can also make you dehydrated, which lowers saliva production.

## **THE SOLUTION: KEEP YOURSELF HYDRATED**

Heavy breathing isn't going to change, so be sure to keep your mouth as moist as possible with plenty of water before, during and after long runs or workouts. Dry mouth alone can be an issue, but when combined with the sugar and acid from your training foods, gels and drinks, it adds up to potential problems for your teeth.

**If you're training for a race or event this summer, throw in some TLC for your teeth to ensure your smile is in great shape when you cross the finish line – just like the rest of you!**



# healthy CAMPING

*If you're a camper, nothing makes you smile more than fresh air, stargazing and good company around a crackling fire. Just don't get so distracted by the wonders of the great outdoors that you forget to stay on track with your oral health routine! Try these tips to help keep your smile sparkling while you're relaxing fireside or hitting the trails.*



## Brush Up

You should brush your teeth twice a day for two minutes each time – and that's true even if you don't have access to a sink. Use bottled water to wet your toothbrush and rinse your mouth. How you store your toothbrush is also important; you'll want to keep it in a breathable container so moisture can evaporate. Non-breathable containers, such as sealed sandwich bags or toothbrush covers, lock moisture in, creating the perfect environment for bacteria.



## First Things First

Don't overlook dental items when you're assembling a first-aid kit before your trip. Cotton, toothache drops and temporary cement for fillings should help alleviate any oral health emergencies until you can get to the dentist. It's also smart to make sure you have your dentist's phone number handy. (This is a good idea even when you're not camping!)



## Avoid Sticky Situations

While s'mores and marshmallows are camping staples, they're not so sweet for your teeth. Try some new, healthy camping recipes, like apple slices roasted with cinnamon instead of brown sugar or garlic-Parmesan veggies (see recipe on [page 5](#)).

## Quench Your Thirst

Drink plenty of water. Hydration is important, but sipping on lots of H<sub>2</sub>O also helps rinse food particles away from teeth, which is especially helpful in an environment where you may not brush as regularly as you normally do.



## Leave No Trace

Most campers are familiar with the "leave no trace" philosophy, which encourages people to leave nature exactly as they found it. Be sure to remove any and all trash, including floss and any disposable items, like single-use toothbrushes, travel-size toothpaste tubes or paper cups.

## HAPPY (AND HEALTHY) CAMPING!



# appointment scheduling at your fingertips

Download the Delta Dental mobile app for hassle-free scheduling!

Scheduling an appointment with your dentist just got easier! Thanks to the latest update to Delta Dental's mobile app, all it takes is a few swipes and taps.



1

After you log in to the app with your username and password, select "Find a Dentist" and enter your information to see scheduling options.

2

Tap on the green "Schedule Appointment" button.

3

You'll be able to view available times and dates for that dentist, then book and manage appointments for yourself and your family members. You'll receive confirmation through email or text (whichever you prefer!). You can also change or cancel appointments if needed.

In addition to scheduling appointments, the Delta Dental mobile app also allows you to access a digital ID card, estimate costs for dental procedures, view claims and coverage information and more. Be sure to download or update the Delta Dental mobile app today.

Appointment scheduling is powered by our partners at Brighter™. Availability may vary by geographic area and individual dentist participation in Brighter Schedule™. This feature is not available for DeltaCare® USA enrollees.

## dental trend spotlight: turmeric whitening

Can spicing up your dental routine really make your teeth shine brighter?

One of the latest DIY dental trends floating around the internet is a homemade whitening concoction made of coconut oil, baking soda and turmeric. Turmeric, a member of the ginger family, is a goldenrod-colored spice often used in South Asian and Middle Eastern cooking.

Proponents say that applying the mixture to teeth and letting it sit for five minutes results in instantly whiter teeth, with even more impressive results after several days of use. And it allegedly does so without the sensitivity that tends to come with traditional whitening methods.



**The verdict:** Don't trade your whitening toothpaste for a jar of spices just yet. Turmeric's whitening powers haven't been scientifically verified, and anyone who uses the DIY concoction as a replacement for fluoride toothpaste is harming their teeth by removing the enamel-protecting mineral from the equation. However, using turmeric as a supplement to fluoride toothpaste probably won't hurt anything but your toothbrush: Turmeric is known for producing yellow stains, so use a toothbrush you don't mind trashing after your experiment. Remember, it's always best to talk with your dentist before starting a new oral health regimen.

# your summer *smile* list

*Make memories that will make you smile this summer. These 10 to-do's will do the trick!*

- 1 Find a hammock. Take a nap.
- 2 Beat the heat at your local library.
- 3 Go stargazing.
- 4 Have a water balloon fight.
- 5 Make a healthy smoothie.
- 6 Hit a local baseball game.
- 7 Watch for fireflies.
- 8 Make a flower crown.
- 9 Go berry picking.
- 10 Get in a round of mini golf.

