

# grin!™

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

spring

2015

volume 4, issue 1

april fools and LOLs

tooth fairy  
financials

what you need to know  
about oral cancer





# grin!™

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 grin!

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# cavity-free calendar

## April

In honor of Oral Cancer Awareness Month, schedule your next checkup – and ask your dentist or hygienist to give you a screening at each exam. Check out page 7 for more information about oral cancer.

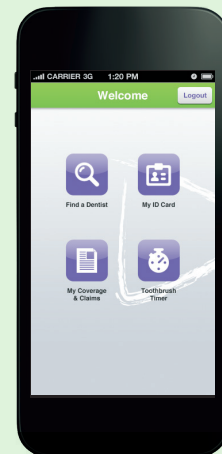
## May

To celebrate Sunscreen Day on May 27, don't forget to give your lips some SPF when you coat your face. Blocking harmful rays may help protect against oral cancer and can also keep your lips from getting dry!



## dental benefits on the go

Delta Dental's free mobile app gives enrollees access to recent claims and coverage information from the convenience of their phones when they log in. Enrollees can also access a copy of their ID card. Looking for an in-network dentist? Our app can help. Bonus: The app features a toothbrush timer that plays music while you – and your kids – brush for the recommended two minutes. **Delta Dental's mobile app is available for iPhone and Android. Download the free app today!**



## two-word answers

**Q: What's the hardest substance in the human body?**

**A: Tooth enamel.**





# on topic with dr. kohn

## assess your oral health risks


*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.*




One-size-fits-all dentistry is a thing of the past. The time-honored “visit your dentist twice a year” mantra is being replaced by leading-edge dental risk assessment technology. By taking just a few minutes to answer some simple questions about yourself and your oral health, you can receive a report assessing your level of oral disease risk and your oral health needs. There are several assessments to choose from, but we recommend myDentalScore ([mydentalscore.com/deltadental](http://mydentalscore.com/deltadental)) for an easy-to-understand oral health score. Take the quiz and then talk with your dentist about what best fits your personal oral health needs.

## the history of oral health:


### historical figures and their bad oral health habits



Despite suffering severe toothaches and gum disease, **Queen Elizabeth I** refused to have her decayed teeth removed.



**Chairman Mao** had badly infected gums, the result of never brushing his teeth. His justification for refusing the toothbrush: “Does a tiger brush his teeth?”



Napoleon's first wife, **Josephine**, trained herself to smile without showing her rotten teeth.





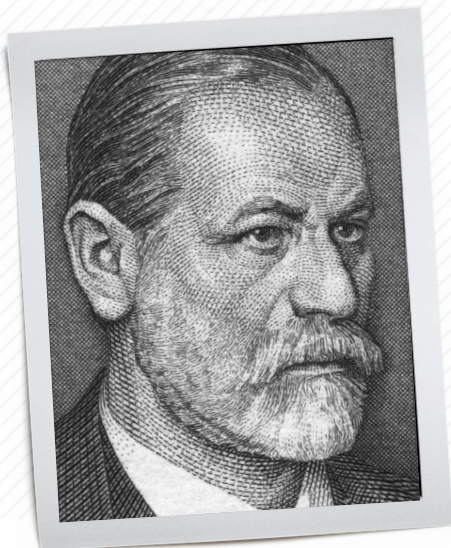
# keeping you covered:

## OriginalToothFairyPoll.com

When you're talking to your child about good oral health and the Tooth Fairy, be sure to visit **OriginalToothFairyPoll.com** for free tips, tricks and resources related to children's oral health. You'll even get to meet the Tooth Fairy herself.

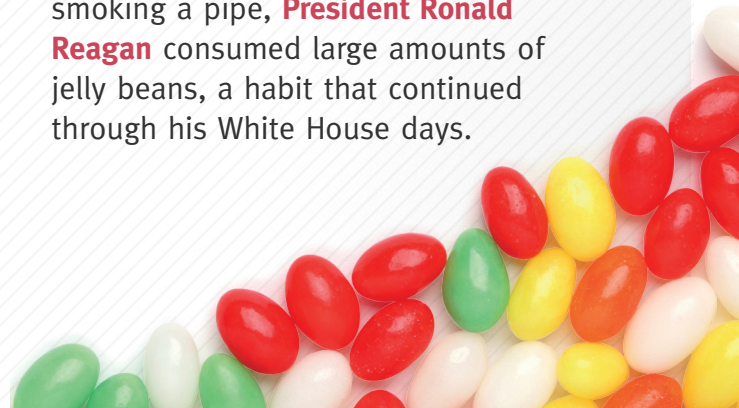
From dental tips for parents with children ages newborn to 12, to fun activities and facts about the Tooth Fairy, **OriginalToothFairyPoll.com** has something for everyone. You can even customize and print out official Tooth Fairy letters and certificates for your child.

Whether your child has just lost a tooth, is working on a wiggly one or simply looking for fun coloring pages and activities, stop by **OriginalToothFairyPoll.com**. It's just one of the many free resources we offer!



**Sigmund Freud** smoked approximately 20 cigars a day until he died from oral cancer in 1939.

In a successful attempt to quit smoking a pipe, **President Ronald Reagan** consumed large amounts of jelly beans, a habit that continued through his White House days.







## readers ask, we answer

Jill writes:

*“Do you have any tips for preventing bad breath? Even though I’m pretty on top of my oral health – I brush twice a day and floss regularly – I also drink a lot of coffee, and I’ve never met a dish with garlic I didn’t like.”*

Hi, Jill. Certain foods top the list when it comes to causing bad breath, which is also known as halitosis. Coffee and garlic are among the worst offenders, along with onions and spicy foods. It sounds like you stay on top of the problem by brushing and flossing as recommended. If possible, brush right after you eat the stinky foods. You can also drink more water and chew sugar-free gum to stimulate saliva flow.

Also, alcohol, smoking, stress and certain medications are major culprits of bad breath because they can cause dry mouth. Saliva helps rinse away food particles and bacteria, so if your mouth is too dry, food debris can stick around and cause stinky breath.

A chronic case of halitosis may be a sign of more serious health issues, such as sinusitis, diabetes and liver or kidney problems, so be sure to discuss concerns with your dentist. He or she can offer personalized recommendations to keep your mouth healthy and smelling fresh.



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



### mouth-friendly recipe: **apple-cinnamon overnight oats**

*Looking for a breakfast that’s nutritious, easy and a bit different than your typical toast? This overnight oatmeal is just the ticket.*

#### **Ingredients:**

1 cup milk  
2/3 cup rolled oats  
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon  
2 tablespoons chopped walnuts  
1 small apple, chopped

#### **Directions:**

Pour milk over a bowl of oats. Stir in cinnamon. Cover and let sit in the fridge overnight to thicken. In the morning, add walnuts and chopped apple. Enjoy cold or heat it up for a warm breakfast treat.





# *What You Need to Know* **ABOUT ORAL CANCER**

*Every hour, an average of one person in the United States dies of oral or pharyngeal cancer. Although the survival rates have increased since the 1960s, they are still relatively low, with only 60 percent of people diagnosed with the disease expected to live at least five years. In honor of Oral Cancer Awareness Month, take a few minutes to educate yourself about the disease.*



## TYPES AND LOCATIONS

*“Oral cancer” refers to cancer occurring on the lips, mouth, tongue or throat. Cancer on the base of the tongue and throat area is becoming more common. This type of oral cancer is known as oropharyngeal cancer.*

## WHOM IT AFFECTS

Oral cancer is twice as common in men as in women. African American men are at the highest risk of developing the disease and die at a higher rate than their white counterparts. Although the cancer has traditionally been associated with people over 40, its diagnosis among young people has been on the rise – particularly those who have human papillomavirus (HPV).

*In the past 20 years, the biggest increase in oral cancer has been due to HPV infections, especially among men. About 7 percent of U.S. adults have oral HPV.*



## KNOW WHETHER YOU'RE AT RISK

Two of the major risk factors for oral cancer are alcohol consumption and tobacco use – including cigarettes, pipes, cigars and smoke-free chewing tobacco. If you smoke and drink, your risk multiplies, since alcohol increases the absorption of the toxic chemicals in tobacco.

Oral cancer has also been linked to exposure to the sun, a personal or family history of cancer and a diet low in fruits and vegetables.

However, a quarter of people with oral cancer had no known risk factors prior to getting the disease, according to the American Dental Association.



*Your risk of developing oral cancer increases the longer and more frequently you've been using tobacco or alcohol.*



## TREATMENT OPTIONS

Early diagnosis provides the best outlook for oral cancer patients. Visiting the dentist regularly can help detect oral cancer at its earliest – and most treatable – stage. Several treatment options are available, depending on the size and location of the tumor and extent of the disease:

- **SURGERY:** Removes the cancerous tumors from the oral cavity and lymph nodes.
- **RADIATION:** Uses high-energy radiation (like X-rays) to kill cancer cells and prevent the spread of the disease. May also be used to reduce a tumor before surgery.
- **CHEMOTHERAPY:** Uses chemicals to kill cancer cells and prevent the spread of the disease. May be used along with radiation to increase effectiveness, or after surgery to destroy any cancer cells left behind.

## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Early diagnosis provides the best outlook for oral cancer patients. Using a mirror, check your mouth at least once a month for any unusual patches, painful sores or lumps that won't heal, and report them to your dentist. Other symptoms include difficulty chewing, swallowing or moving your jaw. Regular visits to the dentist are essential, since a routine checkup will generally include a screening for oral cancer.

You can take a major step in lowering your risk by quitting smoking and limiting your alcohol intake. Smokers are six times more likely to develop oral cancer than nonsmokers, but smokers who quit cut that risk in half in just five years. The fewer units of alcohol you consume per day, the lower your risk of oral cancer.

You can also cut down your risk by adopting healthy habits. Following a healthy diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables – at least five servings daily – may be beneficial, according to some studies. And before spending time in the sun, apply lip balm with sunscreen to block harmful UV rays.







# APRIL

# FOOLS

# AND

# LOLs

# ROTFL

# HA HA

April Fools' Day is one of our favorite holidays, because we love smiles! This April, try these jokes and pranks to lighten the mood with your friends and loved ones.



## Pranks



### MOUTHFUL OF MUSTARD

A typical mustard bottle tip fits perfectly into the top of many toothpaste tubes. Use this to your advantage and squirt a little into the tip of a tube of toothpaste. When your unsuspecting victim goes to load up his or her toothbrush, a bright surprise will await!

**BONUS:** The color is a dead giveaway, so the mustard will never actually reach anyone's teeth ... unless they're so tired, they don't notice! To clean out the mustard, just give the tube a little squeeze.



### A DECEIVING DESSERT

On March 31, tell your children, friends or co-workers that you're making brownies to share the next day. Don't worry – you won't be doing any baking. Instead, cut the letter "E" out of brown construction paper. When you have a handful of these letters, place them in a baking pan and cover the top with a lid or tin foil. Voila! Brown E's. If you're feeling kind, you can share a real snack or sugar-free dessert afterwards.



### SUNDAES FOR SUPPER

It's amazing how similar mashed potatoes look to a certain sweet treat when you use an ice cream scoop to serve them in parfait glasses. Brown gravy stands in for chocolate sauce, and you can even put a cherry on top – a cherry tomato, that is.

# *Jokes*

What did the dentist say to the golfer?

**YOU HAVE A HOLE IN ONE!**

What did the vampire say to the dentist after his checkup?

**FANG YOU VERY MUCH!**

What does an orthodontist do on a roller coaster?

**HE BRACES HIMSELF.**

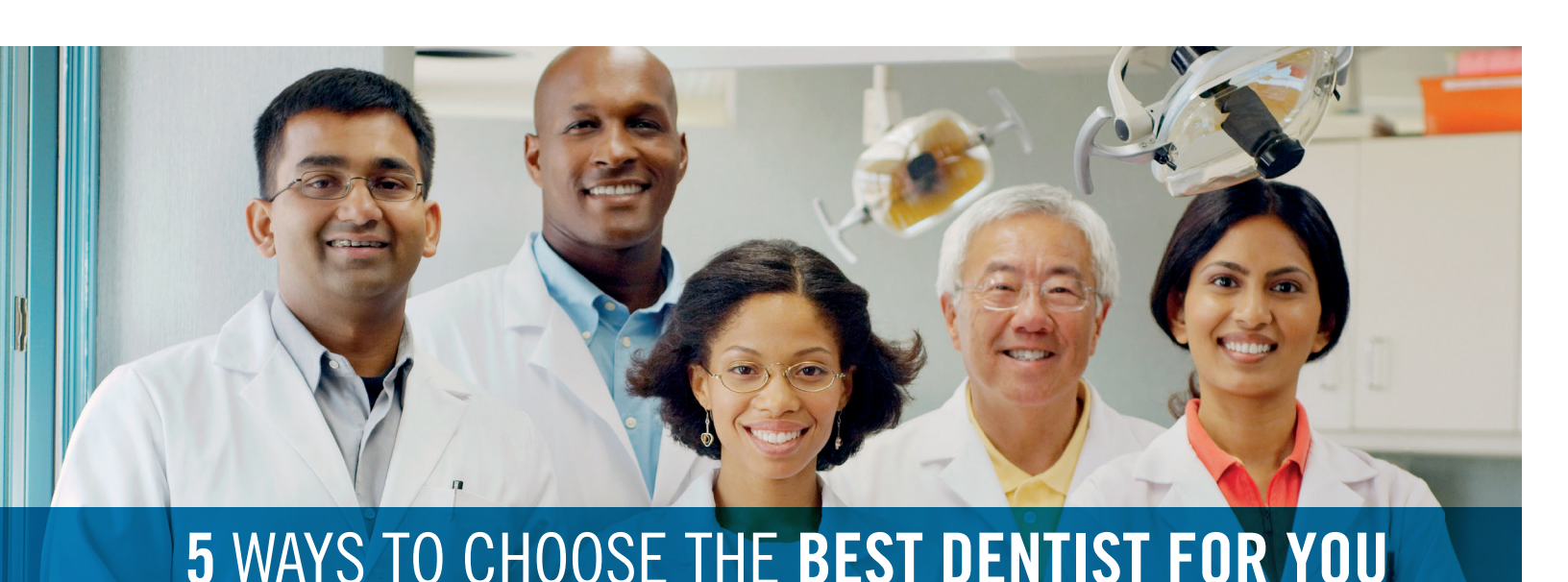
What does the dentist of the year get?

**A LITTLE PLAQUE.**

What did the dentist see at the North Pole?

**A MOLAR BEAR.**





## 5 WAYS TO CHOOSE THE BEST DENTIST FOR YOU

Choosing the right dentist can be a very personal decision. Each dental office offers something different, and it's important to make sure you choose one that's a good fit for you. After all, when you enjoy visiting your dentist, you're more likely to keep regular appointments! Consider these five factors when trying to find a dentist who meets your needs.

### 1 CHOOSING AN IN-NETWORK DENTIST CAN SAVE YOU MONEY.

And it helps you get the most out of your coverage! Use the dentist search tool on [deltadentalins.com](https://deltadentalins.com) to find in-network dentists in your area.

### 2 MAKE SURE YOUR DENTIST IS NEAR YOUR HOME OR OFFICE AND HAS OFFICE HOURS COMPATIBLE WITH YOUR SCHEDULE.

Some offices may be open extra early or relatively late, while others will schedule Saturday appointments. You're more likely to go to the dentist when it's convenient.

### 3 IF DENTAL ANXIETY IS A PROBLEM, FIND A DENTIST WHO CAN SOOTHE YOUR FEARS.

Look for a dental office that employs relaxation or distraction techniques, such as spa-like services or TVs in exam rooms.

### 4 CHOOSE THE TYPE OF DENTIST WHOSE SKILLS BEST FIT YOUR NEEDS.

While many general dentists welcome pint-sized patients, a pediatric dentist may be better equipped to deal with children's issues and unpredictable behavior. If you need a root canal, an implant or braces, a specialist, such as an endodontist, prosthodontist or orthodontist, may be your best bet for a more complex need. Your general dentist will often recommend a specialist for you.

### 5 DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS.

For example, you may want to ask about the services available, the protocol for emergency dental care situations or which new techniques the office has adopted.

Although you may need to visit more than one dental office to find the perfect fit, remember that finding your ideal dentist will keep you comfortable and ensure healthy teeth for years to come.



# Tooth Fairy FINANCIALS:

## RESULTS OF THE 2014 POLL

The quarter (or sometimes dollar, if you were lucky) many of us received from the Tooth Fairy is chump change compared with what she's doling out these days. Delta Dental polled more than 1,000 caregivers, and found some very interesting information about Tooth Fairy trends and habits.

**\$4.36**

THE AVERAGE AMOUNT  
*children received*  
**UNDER THEIR PILLOWS**

IN 2014, UP FROM \$3.50 IN 2013.



The Tooth Fairy  
LEFT AN AVERAGE OF

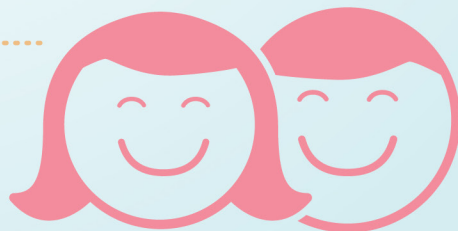
**\$5.74**

for a  
child's **FIRST  
LOST TOOTH.**

**17%**

OF PARENTS SAY  
THEIR CHILDREN ASKED

*the Tooth Fairy* **FOR MONEY.**

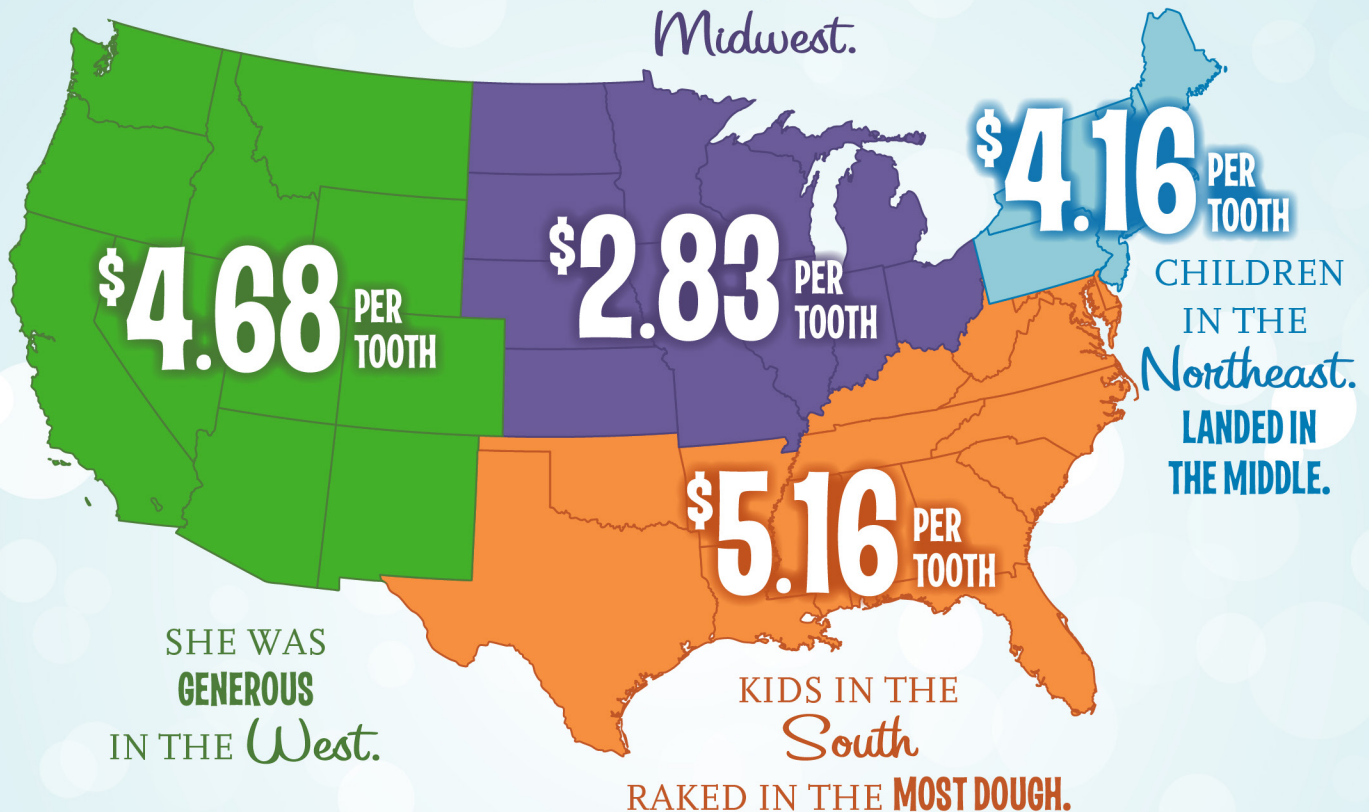




# Tooth Fairy **GIVING BY REGION:**



SHE WAS **STINGIEST**  
WITH KIDS IN THE  
*Midwest.*



Getting your kids excited about the Tooth Fairy is a great way to keep them interested in good oral health habits such as brushing twice a day and flossing daily. Want to make sure they keep it up? Hint that the Tooth Fairy might pay more for teeth in perfect condition. If you've got time to spare, the Tooth Fairy might leave a note encouraging kids to keep up the good work, along with fun new toothpaste, toothbrushes and floss.

To learn more about the Tooth Fairy and take the poll, visit **OriginalToothFairyPoll.com**

 **DELTA DENTAL**

# brushing up



*Ever wonder what your dentist is really thinking? Grin! wanted to find out, too, so we talked to Delta Dental network dentist Dr. Gary Silverstrom of the Silverstrom Group in Livingston, New Jersey.*

**What's the best dental advice you've ever received?** The best advice remains: Any person who sits in my chair is saying he or she trusts me, and I never violate that trust and confidence.

**Do you brush and floss as much as you recommend?** As a clinician, I understand the importance. As a human being, I do the best I can as often as I can.

**Do you have a favorite floss flavor?** If it existed, mint chocolate chip would be my favorite. Otherwise, traditional flavorless floss.

**Do you have any cavities?** Actually, no. I was educated early in prevention – my dad is a dentist.

**If you could tell patients to stop doing one thing, what would it be?** Clenching and grinding your teeth has tremendous deleterious effects.

**Why did you decide you wanted to be a dentist?** It has been a lifelong dream of mine. Growing up in a dental family and observing the wonderful relationships that develop, I have always wanted to be a dentist.

**Does your office have any special features or traditions?** From our beverage center and aromatherapy when the patients arrive, to the individual on-demand TV and movies in each dental suite, and finishing up with a hot therapy towel – everything is geared to the comfort and needs of my patients.

**What dental technology are you especially grateful for?** My “magic wand.” With a wave of my soft-tissue laser, I can eliminate a gummy smile, shape and recontour tissue heights for cosmetic enhancement, or help quiet a canker sore.



*If you'd like to recommend your dentist for a Brushing Up interview, email [grin@deltadental.com](mailto:grin@deltadental.com) with his or her name and contact information.*