

grin!™

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

summer

2015

volume 4, issue 2

Your Guide to the First Tooth Fairy Visit

5 Types of X-Rays You Might Encounter

Red, White and Blue Snacks That Are Good for Teeth

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**your guide to the first
tooth fairy visit**





cavity-free calendar

June

Celebrate International Sushi Day on June 18 by having a roll with salmon, eel or tuna – all good sources of vitamin D, which helps your body absorb bone-building calcium.

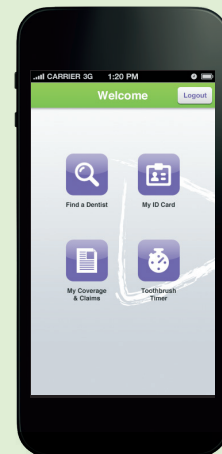
July

Need some Fourth of July snacks? Check out our feature on **page 13** for healthy foods in red, white and blue.



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 or 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 first facial feature most people notice?

A: Your smile!



on topic with dr. kohn

how to keep teeth healthy all day

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.



A lot happens to your teeth between morning and bedtime brushing. It's not always easy or practical to brush and floss after each meal or snack, but a few simple suggestions can keep your teeth healthy and mouth fresh throughout the day:

- **Try to limit sweets to mealtimes.** The saliva produced by chewing other foods helps wash sugar away from teeth.
- **Carry a travel toothbrush.** A quick brush with water will help even if you don't have toothpaste. Or, rinse your mouth with water and chew a stick of sugarless gum to get saliva flowing.
- **Avoid sticky, sugary or starchy between-meal snacks** such as candy, cookies and chips. Substitute cheese, nuts, or carrot and celery sticks.
- **If you're a smoker, think about quitting.** Smoking is a major contributor to tooth stains, gum disease and oral cancer.

the history of oral health: dental anesthesia

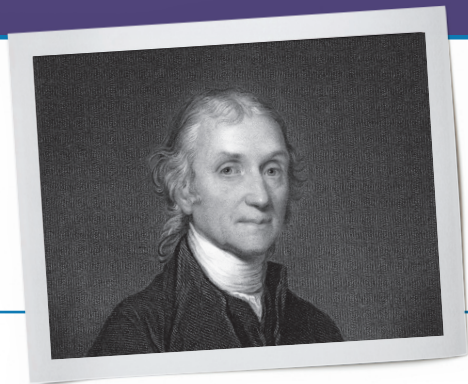


1400s

The **Incas** traditionally chewed coca leaves as an anesthetic.

1772

Laughing gas (nitrous oxide) was discovered by English chemist **Joseph Priestley**.



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. Andrew Greenberger of Periodontics and Implantology Associates.

What's the best dental advice you've ever received? As a patient, the best advice I've ever heard is to keep up with routine care. Routine maintenance will get you a long way! As a professional, the best pearl of wisdom I've received is to always be honest and treat your patients like family.

Any funny stories from the dental chair? The funniest thing I ever heard was when a patient told me he sneezed and his tooth fell out — right onto the streets of New York.

Do you have any fillings? Of course. I grew up in the '60s! However, my children have no fillings and they're in their 20s.

If you could tell patients to stop doing one thing, what would it be? Stop neglecting to use your dental benefits! So many people wait until they have big problems to go to the dentist and don't use their insurance for things like cleanings and exams. Then they run into trouble down the line for not keeping up with simple preventive care. Also, stay in a good routine. If you're in the habit of brushing and flossing regularly, you're bound to have better oral health.



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

1844

Connecticut dentist **Horace Wells** introduced nitrous oxide to dentistry. He experimented on himself, using it to dull the pain of a tooth extraction.

1840s

Anesthetic wasn't widely used before this time, largely because doctors believed pain helped patients heal faster. They also thought the patients' discomfort encouraged doctors to cut quickly and accurately.

1846

Dr. William Morton gave the first successful public demonstration of ether anesthesia during a tooth extraction.



mouth-friendly recipe: frozen fruit pops

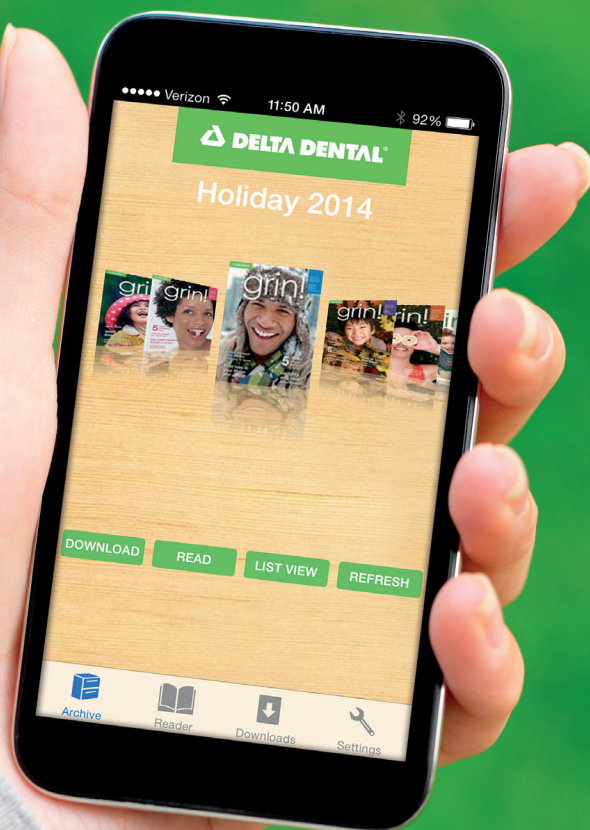
With summer in full swing, you may be craving a cool treat to counter the rising temperatures. Rather than opting for ice pops with tons of added sugar, try this naturally sweetened fruity concoction.

Ingredients:

1/4 cup diced kiwi
1/4 cup diced watermelon
1/4 cup diced strawberries
1/4 cup diced pineapple
1/4 cup halved blueberries
1/4 cup fruit juice
5-oz. paper cups
Craft sticks

Directions:

Combine all fruit in a bowl and fill cups with the mixture. Add a craft stick to each cup and fill each one with a tablespoon of fruit juice. Place in the freezer for a few hours or until firm. Run cups under warm water for a few seconds to remove the fruit pops. Makes four servings.



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a day IN THE life

From the time you wake up to the time you go to bed, you make dozens of decisions that affect your oral health. Follow Lauren as she goes through her day with a healthy mouth in mind.



6:00 A.M.

After a good night's sleep, Lauren gets up and enjoys a healthy breakfast of a banana, some almonds, a cup of yogurt and a mug of coffee. The banana, yogurt and almonds are great choices – the fruit provides fiber, which helps stimulate saliva flow, a natural defense against cavities. And yogurt is an excellent source of calcium, an important mineral for building strong bones and teeth. Coffee isn't good for dental health, because it can stain your teeth and dry out the mouth. But Lauren is aware of these risks and does her best to counteract them with her morning oral care routine.

6:30 A.M.

To prevent coffee stains, get rid of bad breath and remove plaque and food debris, Lauren brushes her teeth with fluoride toothpaste after breakfast. She uses an electric toothbrush with a timer feature to ensure that she brushes for the recommended two minutes, spending 30 seconds on each quadrant of her mouth.



If Lauren's toothbrush didn't have a timer, she could set the timer on her smartphone for two minutes to make sure she was hitting her goal. Do you need a toothbrush timer? Search for "Delta Dental" on Google Play (Android) or the App Store (Apple) to download our free app.

7:00 A.M.

Before heading out the door, Lauren quickly swishes with fluoride mouth rinse. Not only does it help banish any last traces of coffee breath, the fluoride also protects her teeth against cavities.



10:00 A.M.

When Lauren's stomach grumbles at work, she avoids the doughnuts in the break room and reaches for some fruit instead. Snacking smart and avoiding sugary treats are important for maintaining good oral health – and good overall health!



12:30 P.M.

During a business lunch, Lauren has a dish with garlic in it. She knows garlic tends to produce bad breath, so she makes sure to brush her teeth after lunch!

5:30 P.M.

Lauren loves to exercise after work – a good run always helps her relax. Stress is linked to canker sores, cold sores and bruxism, also known as teeth grinding, which wears away enamel and damages teeth. To rehydrate, Lauren carries a bottle of water instead of a sports drink. Sports drinks are not only full of sugar, their high acid content can also weaken tooth enamel, promoting decay.



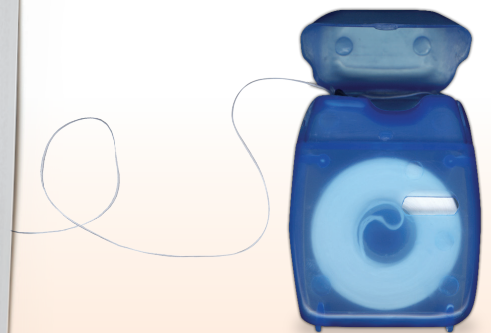
7:30 P.M.

Immediately after dinner, Lauren indulges in a few cookies for dessert. She doesn't do it every night, but when her sweet tooth hits, she knows to wash down her cookies with a glass of water, helping rinse away the sugar and bacteria.



9:30 P.M.

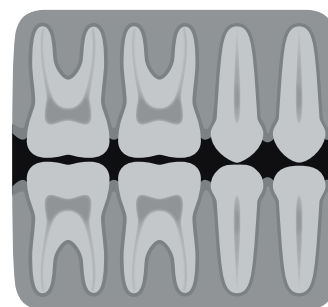
Before her head hits her pillow for the night, Lauren stops by the bathroom to floss and brush with fluoride toothpaste. Making sure her mouth is clean before bed helps remove the day's plaque from her teeth. Having a set bedtime routine also signals to her body that it's time to wind down and go to sleep.



5 TYPES OF X-RAYS YOU MIGHT ENCOUNTER

Ever had an x-ray taken during a dental visit? Dentists use this technology to look at your bones, teeth and any restorations you may have. Dentists use many different types of oral x-rays to examine the mouth, depending on what they're trying to see. Here are the five most common oral x-rays and what they accomplish.

1 BITEWING X-RAYS show the details of teeth in one specific area of the mouth. Each bitewing shows the exposed part of the upper and lower teeth and about half of the tooth root and supporting bone. Bitewing x-rays help dentists detect decay, particularly between teeth, and can also be used to spot changes in the supporting bone typically caused by gum disease. When receiving a bitewing x-ray, you will be asked to bite down on a piece of plastic that holds the x-ray film against your upper and lower teeth.



Bitewing

2 PERIAPICAL X-RAYS show the whole tooth – from the crown to the root, where the tooth attaches to the jaw. Each periapical x-ray shows a small section of teeth in one portion of the upper or lower jaw. These x-rays are most often used to detect any unusual changes in the root and surrounding bone structures. When getting a periapical x-ray, film will be placed near your mouth, using a metal rod with a ring attached to it. You will need to bite firmly onto the device to keep it in place and provide a clear x-ray image.



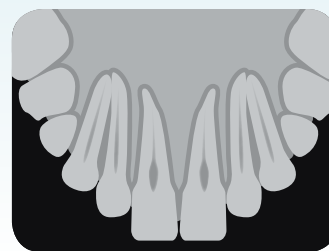
Periapical

3 PANORAMIC X-RAYS take images of the entire mouth area. This x-ray is special because it shows the position of fully emerged teeth, emerging teeth and impacted teeth, all in one image. When receiving a panoramic x-ray, you will bite down on a “bite blocker” to keep teeth aligned and obtain a clear image. A rotating arm on the machine will make a semi-circle around your head to record your mouth.



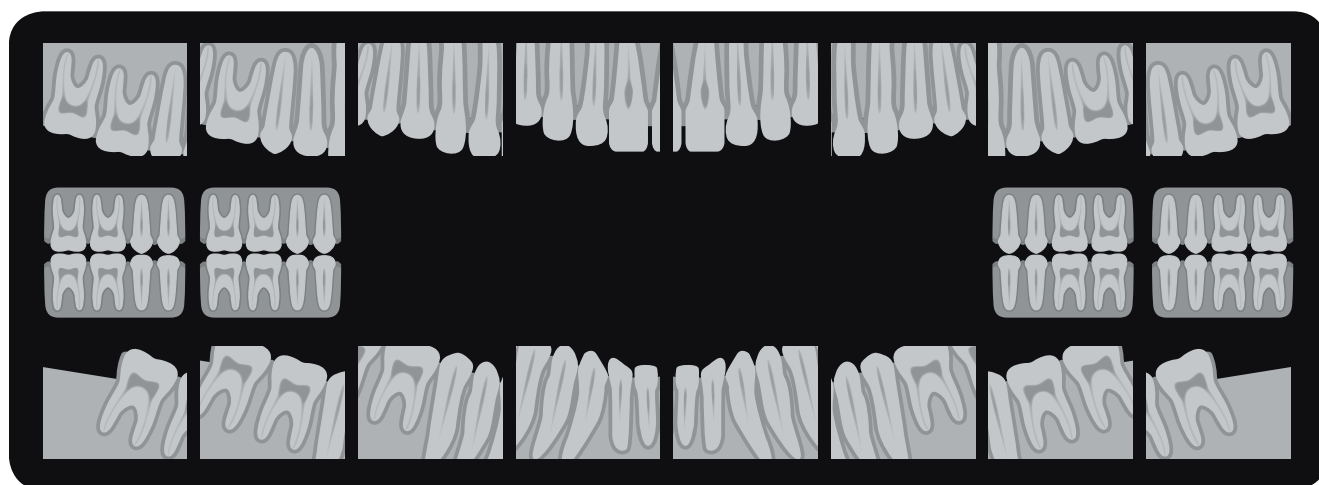
Panoramic

4 OCCLUSAL X-RAYS track the development and placement of a large section or an entire arch of teeth in the upper or lower jaw. Occlusal x-rays are mostly used to find children's teeth that have not yet broken through the gums. The image-taking process is similar to a bitewing x-ray.



Occlusal

5 FULL MOUTH SURVEY X-RAYS are simply what the name states: x-rays of the entire mouth. They're composed of a series of individual images, including a combination of bitewing and periapical. Usually, full mouth x-rays are only needed at an initial screening or when there is a history of jaw pathology (cysts or tumors); for significant dental work such as root canals, extractions and gum disease treatment; or for specific purposes such as wisdom tooth or orthodontic evaluation.



Full Mouth Survey



Red, White and Blue Snacks THAT ARE GOOD FOR TEETH

With the Fourth of July just around the corner, stock up on these festive foods that are patriotic – and good for your oral health!



Red peppers. Red and green peppers are great sources of vitamins A and C, potassium, folic acid and fiber. But because red peppers have spent more time on the vine than their green counterparts, they have 1.5 times more vitamin C. That's great news, since vitamin C helps maintain and repair bones and teeth!

Fresh cherries. Snacking on cherries is an excellent way to cut back on refined sugar while satisfying your sweet tooth with natural sugars. Cherries are also a great source of potassium and magnesium, both of which help support bone mineral density. Cherries promote heart health, reduce cancer risks and contain fiber and vitamin C. Just be careful not to bite down on the pits!



String cheese. The calcium and phosphates in dairy products help return important minerals to your teeth, keeping teeth and bones strong.

Yogurt. Like string cheese, yogurt is a good source of calcium. It also makes for a nutrient-filled dessert – sprinkle strawberries and blueberries on top for a treat that packs a healthy punch.



Blueberries. These small berries are filled with nutritional benefits, including fiber and antioxidants. Fiber-rich foods help stimulate saliva flow, washing away cavity-causing bacteria, while antioxidants help prevent gum disease.

Don't forget to brush your teeth after you eat! It will help remove any plaque and leftover food particles, keeping your smile healthy throughout the holiday weekend.



YOUR GUIDE TO THE FIRST

Tooth Fairy VISIT

It's wiggly. It's wobbly. Yep, your 6-year-old's first baby tooth is ready to come out any day now. Do you know what to do when the time comes? Here's the why, when and how of this major milestone.

WHY THEY WIGGLE

Kids typically get their first baby tooth when they're around 6 months old. All 20 baby teeth are usually in by age 3 – but they don't stick around long. By age 6, permanent teeth start to make their presence known beneath the gums. As those teeth start to move, the roots of the baby teeth slowly dissolve, loosening teeth from the gums.





The Tooth Fairy left
\$255 MILLION
FOR LOST
TEETH IN
2014.*

Illustration of several stacks of green banknotes.Illustration of a blue tooth fairy wing and a fan of green banknotes.

88% OF CHILDREN
RECEIVED CASH
from the Tooth Fairy.*

WHEN TO PULL – AND WHEN NOT TO

Though it can be tempting to pull a loose tooth rather than risk your child swallowing it, pulling is not always the answer. If the tooth is only slightly loose, not enough of the root has dissolved. Don't pull it. If the tooth is very loose but won't quite come out, you can take a tissue or piece of gauze, grasp the tooth firmly and give it a quick twist.

HOW TO GREET THE TOOTH FAIRY

Your child is probably already excited to experience a little Tooth Fairy magic. You can make it even more of an event with some extra touches. Consider buying or sewing a special pillow with a pocket for a special tooth, or crafting a personalized box. Be creative, and above all else, have fun with it!

TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK

Let's face it – kids can get tired of constant reminders to brush and floss. Use the Tooth Fairy to make the same points, and oral health suddenly becomes a lot more interesting. Have a discussion with your child about how the Tooth Fairy likes to find shiny, cavity-free teeth under the pillow. Mention, if you wish, that she saves her best gifts for healthy teeth. You might also consider having the Tooth Fairy leave a letter about your child's good oral health habits. A little praise goes a long way! For free, customizable correspondence from the Tooth Fairy, including letters and a certificate, visit OriginalToothFairyPoll.com.

IN **32%** OF HOMES, **DAD ASSISTED**
the Tooth Fairy.* 

Three green house icons arranged horizontally.

Whether she brings money, a letter, toys or a toothbrush, don't miss the opportunity to use the Tooth Fairy's magic to your advantage. With just a sprinkling of fairy dust, she may be able to get your kids to brush and floss – happily! **To learn more about the Tooth Fairy, visit OriginalToothFairyPoll.com.**



* Delta Dental 2014 Original Tooth Fairy Poll



readers ask, we answer

Ellie writes:

“My jaw has been really sore lately, almost as if I chewed gum for hours on end. I thought about my habits and can’t figure out a reason for the pain. What might have caused it, and what can I do to feel better?”

Hi, Ellie. Jaw discomfort can certainly be a pain in the neck – or mouth, as the case may be. Sore jaws may have a number of different causes, one being temporomandibular joint disorders (TMJ). These joints are the two that connect your jaw to your skull near your ear. When the many muscles that attach to these joints aren’t working in harmony, they can become sore and cause chronic jaw pain, painful clicking or popping and a change in how your upper and lower teeth fit together. Though science isn’t sure what causes TMJ, it’s possible that stress is a factor.

Tooth grinding, also known as bruxism, may be the culprit if you experience headaches, earaches or neck aches in addition to your jaw pain. Many people unknowingly grind their teeth, especially while sleeping. Over-the-counter pain medication such as ibuprofen may help relieve your discomfort. You should also skip hard, crunchy and chewy foods and avoid extreme jaw movements such as yawning, opening your mouth wide and chewing gum. To relieve stress, try relaxation techniques including meditation, stretching and deep breathing exercises.

Be sure to discuss your jaw pain with your dentist – he or she can assess wear patterns and jaw alignment to determine the cause. In the case of bruxism, your dentist may recommend a nighttime mouthguard to prevent tooth damage and erosion.



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