

# grin!®

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

spring/  
summer  
2017

volume 6, issue 1

healthy  
**CAMPING**

5 things that  
yellow teeth

race toward a  
healthy smile

your summer  
smile list



A photograph of a middle-aged man with grey hair, smiling broadly and looking towards the left. He is wearing a blue V-neck sweater over a white shirt. He is in a kitchen, with a bowl of vegetables (carrots and tomatoes) visible in the foreground. The background shows kitchen cabinets and a window.

# smile

by alex



smile power™

No one has a smile like you. And no one can keep it healthy like us. Like Alex, your smile is unique. It deserves Delta Dental, the nation's leading dental benefits provider. With the largest network of dentists nationwide, quick answers and personalized service, we make it easy to keep your smile healthy.





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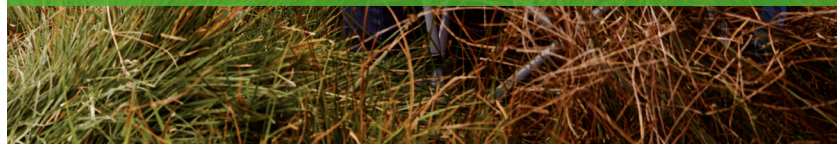
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# on topic with dr. kohn

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

X-rays are an important tool that allows 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, and 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, or "as low as reasonably achievable." In other words, your dentist should only order what is absolutely needed to make a diagnosis. Your dentist should also adhere to the [guidelines for dental radiographs](#) established by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the American Dental Association (ADA).

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 outdoors for a flavorful, healthy addition to your camping menu.

### ingredients:

3 tablespoons olive oil  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tablespoon Italian seasoning  
1/4 teaspoon onion powder  
Salt and pepper to taste

24 oz. broccoli florets  
16 oz. baby potatoes, halved  
10 oz. baby carrots  
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan

### directions:

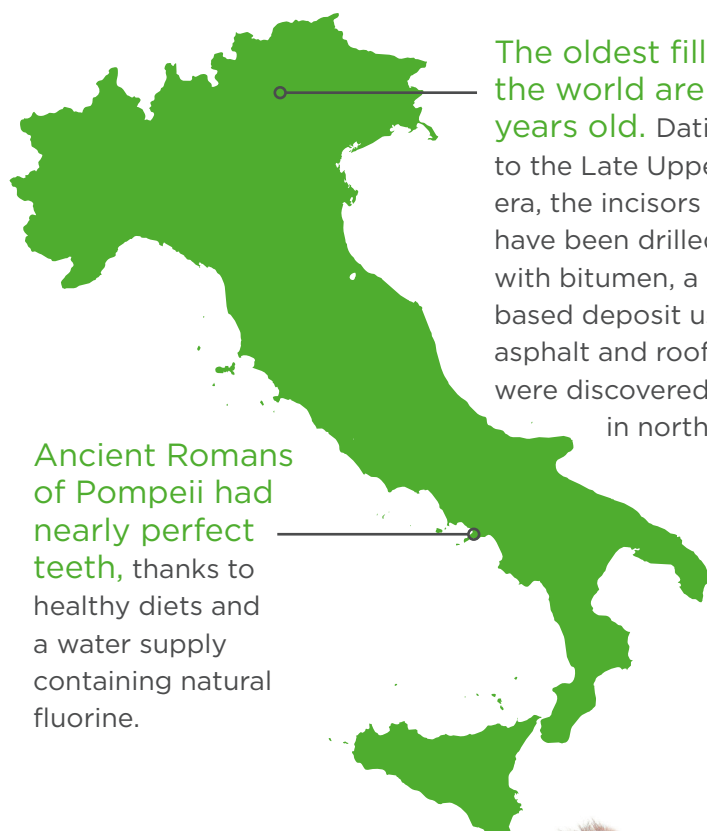
- 1 Whisk olive oil, garlic and spices together in a bowl.
- 2 Cut four sheets of foil, each about a foot long, and place equal amounts of veggies in the center of the foil sheets.
- 3 Fold up the sides of each foil packet, then drizzle the olive oil mixture over each one. Bring up long sides of foil 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.
- 5 Place foil packets on hot coals from campfire, with folded ends up. Cook until veggies are soft and tender, about half an hour.
- 6 Remove from coals. Open packets carefully, and sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top. Let veggies cool before serving.



# 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. Dating back to the Late Upper Paleolithic era, the incisors appear to have been drilled and filled with bitumen, a petroleum-based deposit used today in asphalt and roofing. They were discovered in the 1990s in northern Italy.

Ancient Romans of Pompeii had nearly perfect teeth, thanks to healthy diets and a water supply containing 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 and belonged to an ancestor of orangutans.



Dental plaque reveals that Neanderthals used tree bark as a painkiller. DNA traces of poplar, which contains the active ingredient in aspirin, were found in fossilized plaque from over 40,000 years ago.





## readers ask, we answer

*Kristi asks:*

“I know fruits and veggies are essential to good oral health, but does it matter if I use fresh fruits and veggies or frozen?”

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.



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# 5 causes of yellow teeth

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What makes teeth yellow? Here are five top causes of tooth discoloration.

1



## Genetics

Like other traits, yellow teeth can run in the family. Natural shades of enamel can vary, with some people closer to the yellow end of the spectrum.

2



## Age

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

3



## Medications

Some antihistamines, antipsychotic drugs and high blood pressure medications can cause enamel to turn yellow. Tetracycline antibiotics are known to result in severe teeth stains, especially in young children. Since 1980s, doctors have stopped prescribing the drug to children under the age of 8 and pregnant women.

4



## Tannins

Found in coffee, tea and wine, natural compounds called tannins can stick to enamel, leaving stains.

5



## Tobacco

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.

**What you can do:** A regular dental cleaning can remove stains, brightening your smile. If you're looking for an even whiter smile, ask your dentist about whitening treatments. Check your plan booklet to see if whitening is a covered service. Always talk to your dentist before trying to bleach your teeth yourself.



two-word  
answers

Q: How many bristles are  
on a toothbrush?

A: About 2,500.



*"A smile  
IS A  
curve  
THAT SETS EVERYTHING  
straight."*  
- PHYLLIS  
DILLER



A full-page background image of a woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a bright pink tank top, black shorts, and blue and green running shoes. She is running on a gravel path that leads towards a body of water under a bright, slightly cloudy sky. She is smiling and looking upwards, with white earbuds in her ears and a black armband on her right arm.

# 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.

Athletes who train frequently tend to have more cavities and tooth erosion than those who train or exercise less, according to the *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports*. What's behind the higher rate of tooth decay? Here are two main causes — and how can protect your teeth.



## THE REASON: ***SUGAR AND CARBS***

One cavity culprit is the high amount of carbohydrates endurance athletes tend to consume to keep energy levels up while training. Because 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: ***HYDRATE AND BRUSH***

If you eat or drink right after a run, make sure to keep a bottle of water handy. Not only will plain tap water help you stay hydrated, swishing it around your mouth can dilute the acid and sugar in your food. Brush with fluoride toothpaste to remove debris from your teeth and gums. Never go for a run with food particles still in your mouth.

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## THE REASON: ***HEAVY BREATHING***

When athletes exert a lot of energy, they naturally breathe through their mouths to try to take in more air. This can quickly dry out the mouth, leaving teeth vulnerable to decay.

## THE SOLUTION: ***KEEP YOUR MOUTH MOIST***

Always drink water before, after and during a workout. During less strenuous activities, try to breathe through your nose instead of your mouth.

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If you've noticed that your oral health has been getting worse, talk to your dentist.





A person is lying in a tent, looking out at a sunset over mountains. The tent's opening frames the view of a bright, cloudy sky with the sun low on the horizon. Below the tent, a field of tall grass is visible, and in the distance, a small town or village is nestled in a valley. The person's legs and feet, wearing dark hiking boots, are visible in the foreground.

# 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 forget about your oral health routine! Try these tips on your next excursion.





## Brush up

You should brush your teeth twice a day for two minutes each time — 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!

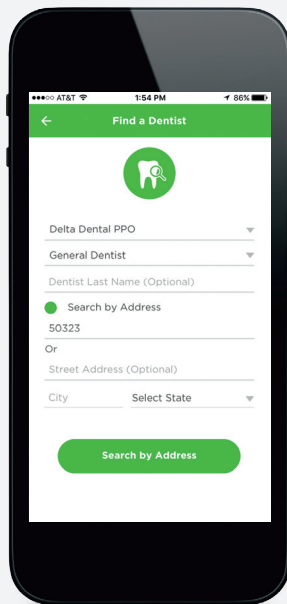




# appointment scheduling at your fingertips

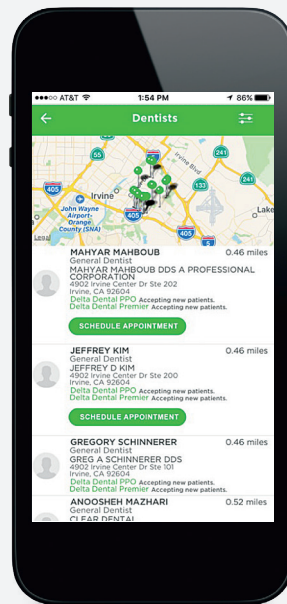
Download the Delta Dental mobile app for hassle-free scheduling!

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.



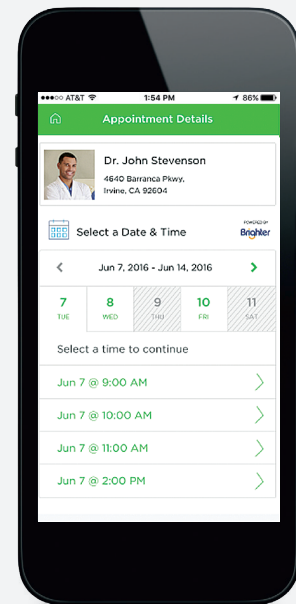
1

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. Ready to try it out? Download the Delta Dental app from the App Store or Google Play.

Appointment scheduling is powered by our partners at Brighter™. Availability may vary by geographic area and individual dentist participation in Brighter Schedule™. This and other features are 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 before brushing it away 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 using this DIY method as a replacement for fluoride toothpaste means losing the enamel-strengthening benefits of fluoride. However, using turmeric as a supplement to fluoride toothpaste probably won't hurt anything but your toothbrush: Turmeric is known for staining everything yellow, 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.

