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**When to get  
a second opinion**

**7 tips to  
rethink lunch**

**Your teeth on  
a vegan diet**

**Is that a cavity?  
How to tell**

Understand how  
**ALLERGIES**  
affect oral health



in this issue of  
**grin!**



### Your teeth on a vegan diet

Can cutting animal products out of your diet put your dental health at risk?

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### Got allergies?

It's not just you. Your teeth can get the sniffles, too.

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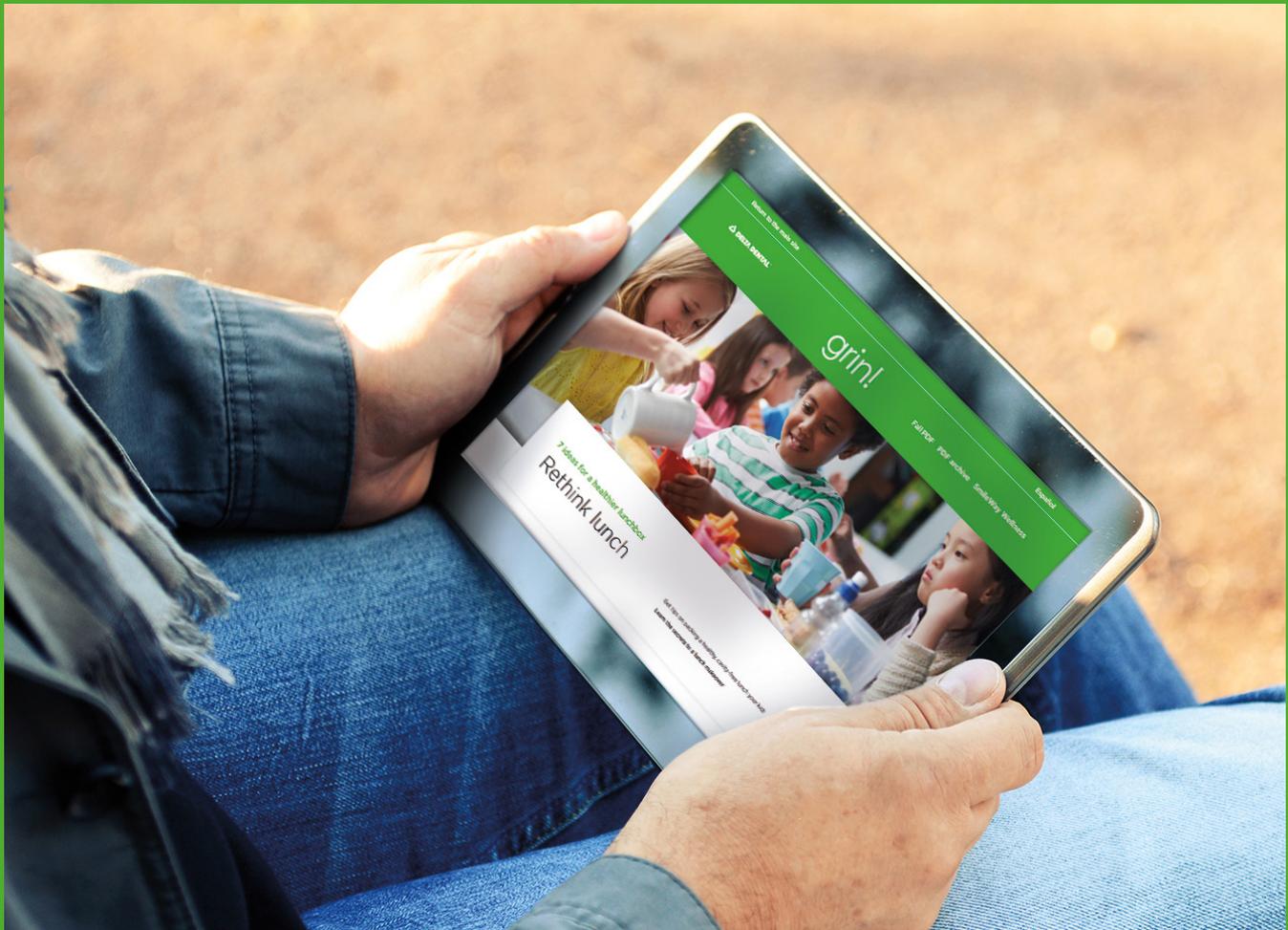
### When to get a second opinion

Sometimes it's worth asking another dentist to weigh in on an issue.

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## On topic with Dr. Dill

### Give your teeth a sporting chance

Exercise is one of the best things you can do to keep your mouth and body healthy. But young athletes may have a higher risk of chipping teeth or experiencing other mouth injuries, depending on the sport.

Which sports can cause dental injuries? Obviously, football has a lot of physical contact, which is why helmets and mouthguards are specifically designed to minimize injuries. But even non-contact sports like basketball, soccer and baseball can cause inadvertent falls or elbows to the mouth.

It's important for all young athletes to wear mouthguards during practices and games to minimize their risk of injury.

Hydration sources are another cause for concern. Sports drinks are frequent major sponsors of professional and college sports, so we often see our favorite stars drinking them. And it's not unusual for young athletes to mimic professionals. Unfortunately, sports drinks can be filled with sugar and unnecessary carbohydrates. Athletic activities typically don't require participants to replace minerals, electrolytes and carbohydrates. In fact, the high carbohydrate content in these sports drinks can cause obesity if consumed in large quantities. The sugars in many of them can also lead to tooth decay. Drinking plain water during and after exercise is far healthier and won't lead to obesity.

Staying hydrated is also essential. Make sure your kids keep a water bottle handy to stay refreshed during practice and games. A dry mouth can increase your child's chance of cavities. Drinking water helps maintain a healthy pH in the mouth. It also washes away food debris and harmful bacteria.

And don't forget about a nutritious diet. Kids who eat balanced meals, with lots of protein and complex carbohydrates, will feel better throughout the day, perform better in sports and be at lower risk of cavities than kids who fuel up on crackers and cookies. Check out the salmon and veggies recipe on the next page for a fun dish kids will love.

If your children participate in sports, it's as easy as 1-2-3: Make sure they wear mouthguards, hydrate with water and fuel up with healthy foods.



Meet Joseph Dill, DDS, Delta Dental's Vice President of Dental Science and Network Strategy. With over 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: Salmon and vegetable foil packets

Looking for a tasty dish that'll fill you up and gear you up for the day ahead? Try this mouthwatering salmon recipe, which serves four. Flaky and flavorful, the salmon is roasted with spices and veggies. It's packed with protein and phosphorus for sustained energy and strong teeth.

## Ingredients:

4 skinless salmon fillets (6–8 ounces each)  
1 pound assorted vegetables, such as broccoli, carrots and cauliflower  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
2 teaspoons kosher salt  
½ teaspoon ground black pepper  
½ teaspoon smoked paprika  
2 cloves pressed garlic (or ½ teaspoon dry garlic powder)  
½ teaspoon white sesame seeds  
4 pieces of aluminum foil (14 by 14 inches)

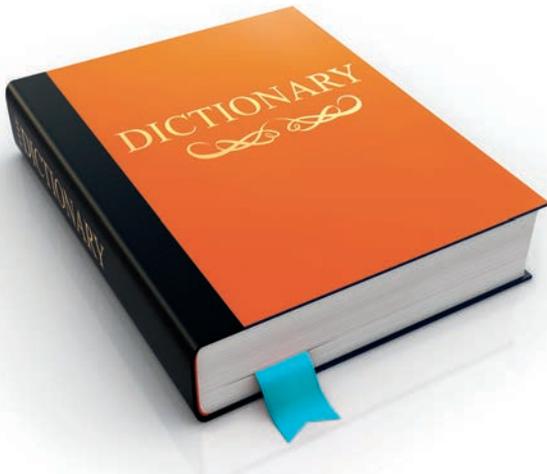
## Directions:

- ① Preheat oven to 450° F.
- ② Wash and cut up vegetables. Divide them up, placing a quarter of the vegetables in the middle of each foil square.
- ③ Mix 1 teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper and 1 tablespoon olive oil in a small bowl. Pour evenly across all four piles of vegetables.
- ④ Place salmon on each pile of vegetables.
- ⑤ Season salmon with remaining salt and pepper, smoked paprika and garlic. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with sesame seeds.
- ⑥ Wrap foil around vegetables and salmon, sealing into individual packets.
- ⑦ Place packets on a baking sheet. Bake at 450° F for approximately 15 to 20 minutes. Salmon is fully cooked when flaky and opaque.
- ⑧ Remove packets from oven and unwrap.
- ⑨ Place the freshly cooked salmon and veggies on plates. Dig in!



## History of oral health: Selfies

Want to capture a memory with friends? Grab your phone or camera, stretch out your arm and take a selfie! The word may be new, but the concept has been around for a while. Here's a look at the history of selfies.



### Origin of the word “selfie”

Oxford Dictionaries declared “selfie” its 2013 word of the year, but the term began growing in popularity in 2011 in Australia, before peaking worldwide in 2014, according to Google Trends. The earliest recorded use is thought to have been on an Australian internet forum in the early 2000s.

### The first selfie taken in space

High above the atmosphere, astronaut Buzz Aldrin snapped a selfie during his 1966 Gemini 12 mission. Talk about an out-of-this-world picture!

### The first American selfie

The first selfie was taken in 1839 by an amateur chemist and photographer, Robert Cornelius, according to the Library of Congress.

### City with the most selfies

Who takes the most selfies? Head to Makati City in the Philippines, where residents and tourists make take more selfies than any other city in the world, according to *Time* magazine. Say “cheese”!





## Readers ask, we answer

*Sabrina asks:*

**“Is there  
an easy  
way to tell  
if I have  
a cavity?”**

Hi, Sabrina. Not really. There’s no surefire way to identify decay without a professional evaluation, so it’s best to ask your dentist if you think you might have a cavity.

Cavities form as acid and bacteria in the mouth wear down the surface of your tooth, called the enamel. A cavity is the hole that develops as this protective layer of your tooth breaks down. You might notice it as a dark spot on the tooth. But your dentist can take a closer look to see if the spot is actually a cavity.

Tooth decay is one of the most common causes of dark spots on teeth. But sometimes spots are just surface stains caused by foods or drinks. Staining can be easily removed during a dental cleaning or teeth whitening. Certain medications can also cause stains on the teeth. A spot can also be a sign that the tooth has been injured.

During a dental exam, your dentist will use a pointy tool called a dental explorer to check any suspicious spots on your teeth. If the spot feels hard, it’s generally not a cavity. Healthy enamel is the hardest substance in the human body. If the spot feels “sticky,” though, it’s a good sign you have a cavity. The stickiness is the softening of your enamel by bacteria.

When cavities begin, they only affect the enamel. This layer of the tooth doesn’t contain nerve endings, so you won’t feel any pain. If a cavity grows large enough, it can reveal the next layer of the tooth, called the dentin. This can cause sensitivity to hot, cold and pressure. An untreated cavity can eventually spread infection to the root of the tooth, causing intense pain.

The best way to keep an eye on cavities is to visit your dentist regularly for cleanings and exams. And if you’ve noticed any sensitivity, pain or lasting dark spots on your teeth, don’t hesitate to schedule an appointment with your dentist.

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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.

grin!

# Allergies

and oral health



It's autumn, and the leaves are turning brilliant shades of yellow and red. But the season can also kick allergies in overdrive. All that sneezing and congestion can mean trouble for your teeth. Here's how you can keep your teeth happy despite the sniffles.

## Watch out for fall allergies

Around September, allergy triggers begin to flourish. Ragweed pollen, caused by a common North American shrub, is one of the main culprits. The lovely fall breeze carries the pollen for hundreds of miles, so even if ragweed plants doesn't grow near you, they can still cause your allergies to flare up. Autumn also stirs up mold spores and dust mites, which can trigger runny noses and watery eyes.





## Understand the dental side effects

Here's how hay fever can hurt your teeth:

- **Dry mouth.** You're more likely to breathe through your mouth when your nose is clogged up. That can dry up saliva, putting your teeth at higher risk for cavities. Saliva helps digest food, wash away food particles and neutralize acidity. Antihistamines can also contribute to dry mouth.
- **Tooth pain.** Feel an ache in an upper tooth? Allergies may be to blame. Sinus congestion in the cavity above the mouth can put pressure on your tooth roots, causing phantom toothache.
- **Bad breath.** The increase in bacteria associated with post-nasal drip, a common allergy symptom, can lead to bad breath.

## What you can do

It's easy to find relief from your allergies and protect your teeth:

- **Take antihistamines to keep your allergies in check.** Antihistamines can reduce symptoms of runny nose and sinus congestion — and the dental effects they can cause.
- **Drink more water.** Proper hydration reduces the effects of dry mouth. It can also help fight congestion. If you're still having trouble with dry mouth, ask your dentist about saliva substitutes.
- **Try a humidifier.** Running a humidifier as you sleep can relieve the symptoms of allergies. The vapor released soothes your throat and reduces inflammation.

And if you have any concerns about your allergies or dental health, don't hesitate to reach out to your physician and dentist.

## 2-word answers



**Q:**  
Who has better teeth: men or women?

**A:**  
Typically, women.

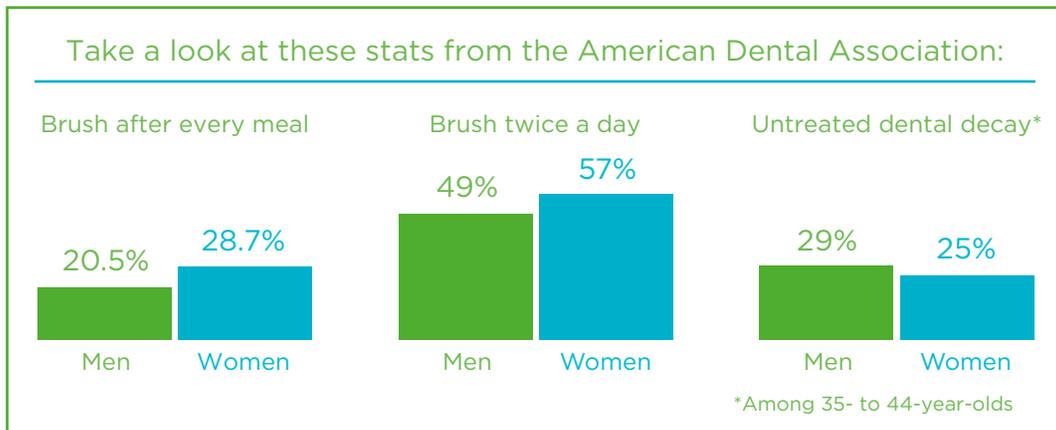
When it comes to oral health, women score better than men.

Women are more likely to visit the dentist regularly for cleanings and exams, according to the American Dental Association, which conducted a study of adults ages 35 to 44. Compared to women, men have a higher tendency to avoid the dentist for years at a time.

Regular cleanings and exams can reduce the chance of cavities and gum disease and catch any issues early on. That may be why men are more likely to have untreated tooth decay.

And when women do have dental problems, they're more likely to follow the dentist's recommend treatment plan, according to a 2015 study in the *International Dental Journal*.

What's more, female respondents were more likely than male respondents to report brushing twice a day or even after every meal.



But regardless of your sex, you can choose to protect your teeth. Make sure to brush and floss every day, and visit the dentist regularly for diagnostic and preventive care.

# 7 tricks to pack a healthier lunch

Packing a brown-bag lunch can be a cheaper, healthier alternative to the school cafeteria, but it depends on the foods and snacks you choose. Try these tips for a dentist-approved lunch makeover.





### 1. Be creative with healthy foods

Healthy doesn't have to be boring. Use cookie cutters to turn slices of cheddar cheese into stars and hearts. With just a melon-baller and some toothpicks, you can make colorful fruit kebabs out of watermelon, cantaloupe and honeydew.

Is your kid obsessed with dinosaurs? Use a dinosaur-shaped sandwich cutter to add a Jurassic flair to lunchtime.

You can also add a personal touch by including doodles, stickers or fun notes with food trivia.

#### Did you know...?

- Strawberries and raspberries are the only fruits with seeds on the outside.
- A banana is technically a berry.
- Carrots aren't just orange. They can also be red, white, purple and yellow.

### 2. Remember the five food groups

For a balanced diet, include all the food groups: fruits, vegetables, grain and protein and dairy. Think outside the box. Veggies can be roasted, fruits can be blended and protein doesn't have to mean deli meat. Include a hard-boiled egg, a tasty bean dip or some tuna salad.

### 3. Go for whole grain

When choosing bread, go for whole grain. Complex carbs take longer to break down, helping your kid stay focused on classes longer. Plus, whole grains may even reduce the risk of gum disease and oral cancer, according to clinical nutrition studies.

And it's not just sandwich bread that can be whole grain. Try whole-grain tortillas, pita bread and pasta.

### 4. Add dips and sauces

Dips are a great way to spice up your child's lunch and make eating fun. Hummus, cottage cheese and yogurt make easy, healthy dips. You can also make your own savory yogurt (think tzatziki) by mixing plain whole-milk yogurt with herbs and spices. Making your own dips lets you control the ingredients and avoid added sugars. Use drip-free sealable containers to prevent messes.

For dippable snacks, pack baby carrots, celery sticks, strips of bell peppers and apple slices. If your kid loves potato chips, try beet chips, tortilla chips or zucchini chips. Whole-wheat pita cut into strips also makes a great dipper. For more filling options, try using samosas, veggie fritters or chicken fingers.

### 5. Make it colorful

Colorful foods can brighten up a lunchbox. Entice your kids to eat their veggies by offering a rainbow of choices. Red and orange vegetables are often high in vitamin C (healthy gums), and leafy green veggies are rich in calcium (strong teeth). Stock up on cherry tomatoes, snap peas and dried beet chips for added color.

### 6. Rethink sweets

Kids love dessert, but that doesn't have to mean candy. Satisfy your kid's sweet tooth with healthier alternatives. Swap out candy with naturally sweet treats like berries and grapes. Instead of a candy bar, try a single square of dark chocolate.

### 7. Don't forget about drinks

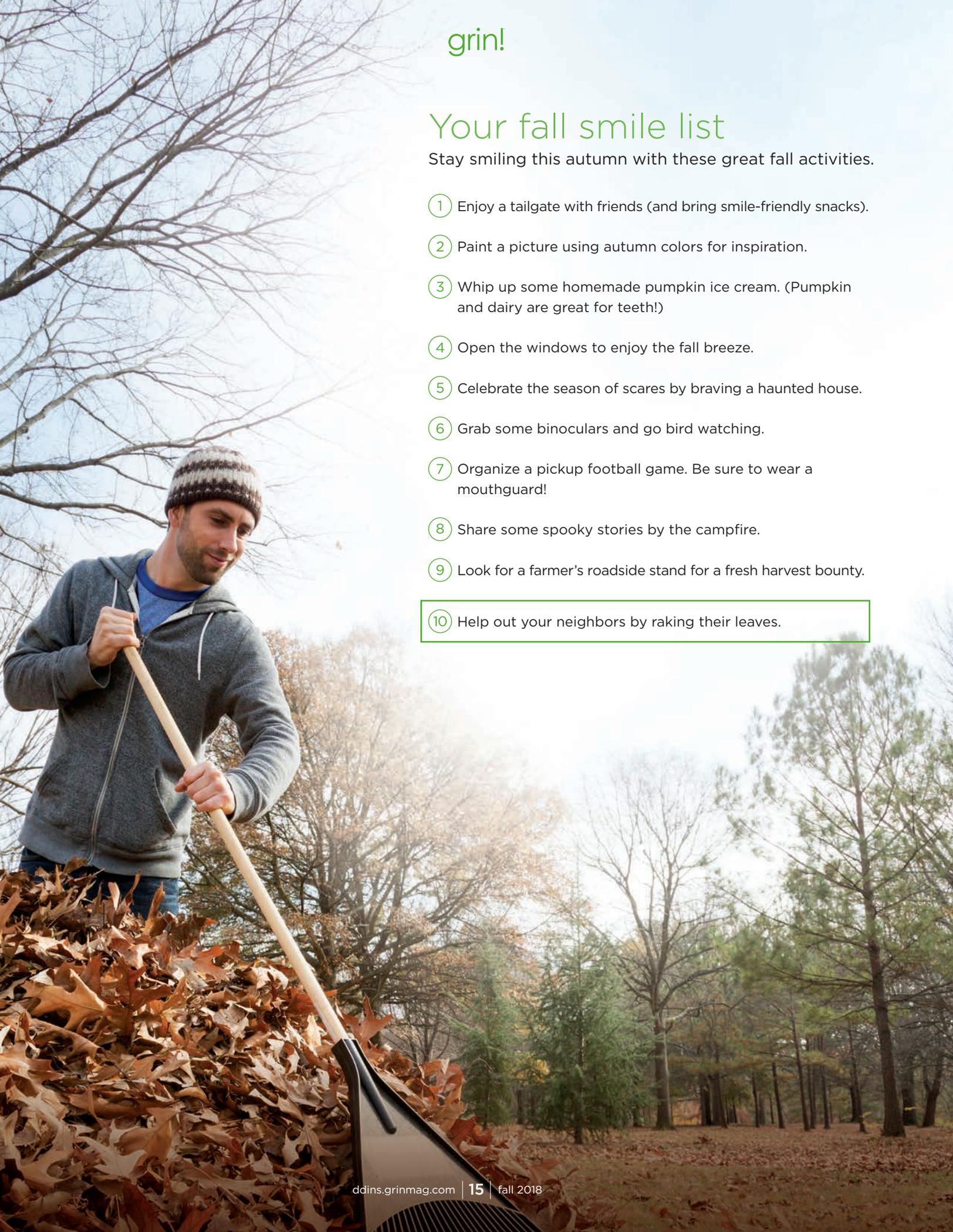
The high levels of sugar and acid in juice can harm young teeth. Instead of juice boxes, keep your child hydrated with tap water or milk. Fill a reusable water bottle with tap water for an added fluoride boost. When choosing milk, keep it plain. Chocolate and strawberry milk are high in added sugars, so go for unflavored whole milk — a great source of calcium.



## Your fall smile list

Stay smiling this autumn with these great fall activities.

- ① Enjoy a tailgate with friends (and bring smile-friendly snacks).
- ② Paint a picture using autumn colors for inspiration.
- ③ Whip up some homemade pumpkin ice cream. (Pumpkin and dairy are great for teeth!)
- ④ Open the windows to enjoy the fall breeze.
- ⑤ Celebrate the season of scares by braving a haunted house.
- ⑥ Grab some binoculars and go bird watching.
- ⑦ Organize a pickup football game. Be sure to wear a mouthguard!
- ⑧ Share some spooky stories by the campfire.
- ⑨ Look for a farmer's roadside stand for a fresh harvest bounty.
- ⑩ Help out your neighbors by raking their leaves.





## Dental trend spotlight: Vegan diets

Veganism is on the rise. Four years ago, only 1 in every 100 Americans followed the plant-based diet, according to GlobalData. By 2017, 6% of Americans considered themselves vegan.

### What is veganism?

Veganism is a diet — or lifestyle — free of animal products. Like vegetarians, vegans don't eat meat. But they go a step further, avoiding all animal products, such as eggs, dairy products and honey. Some vegans also avoid leather, fur and products tested on animals.

Some vegans are motivated by animal welfare. Others choose a vegan diet to reduce their impact on the planet. Health considerations may also play a role, such as lowering cholesterol.

### How does a vegan diet affect your teeth?

Most people can live a healthy life without meat, according to the American Dietetic Association, but vegans may face certain dental risks:

- Nutritional deficiencies. Giving up traditional sources of nutrients can increase the risk for gum disease and tooth decay.
- Starch-heavy substitutions. Relying heavily on grains and sugar products as substitutes for meat and dairy can increase your risk of cavities.

**The verdict:** As long as you opt for nutrient-rich alternatives to meat and dairy, veganism isn't a problem for your oral health.

What vitamins and minerals should vegans look out for?

### Calcium

A key mineral for strengthening your teeth, calcium protects your enamel from cavities. Dairy is a popular source of calcium, but vegan alternatives includes broccoli, leafy greens, soybeans and calcium supplements.

### Vitamin D

Your body also needs vitamin D to absorb calcium properly. Instead of fatty fish, cheese and milk, opt for vegan options like fortified almond milk, soy milk or rice milk. (Check the packaging to see if it's been enriched with vitamin D.) You can also get vitamin D naturally by being outside in the sunshine.

### Phosphorus

Like vitamin D, phosphorus supports calcium in building strong bones and teeth. It's found in a wide range of foods, including these plant-based options: soybeans, lentils and pumpkin seeds.

### Vitamin B12

This essential vitamin helps build red blood cells, DNA and more. Without it, you may feel numb, short of breath and in pain. A vitamin B12 deficiency can also cause depression, memory loss and paranoia. Although animal products make up most natural sources of vitamin B12, vegans can turn to seaweed (nori) for a great plant-based source. Vitamin B12 is also available in supplements and is sometimes added to tofu and breakfast cereals.

# Should I get a second opinion?

When it comes to your health, it's always best to trust your instincts. If you feel unsure about a dental diagnosis or treatment plan, consider getting a second opinion from another dentist. Getting a second opinion can help you understand your options and feel confident about the treatment plan you choose.

## Why should I get a second opinion?

Second opinions are great way to confirm a diagnosis or learn about a different treatment plan. They're best for evaluating treatments that require complicated or costly dental care like root canals, implants and braces.

## Will a second consultation be covered by my dental plan?

It might be, but dental plans differ when it comes to second opinions. Closed-network plans may not cover services at a dentist other than your primary care dentist. If you're covered by a PPO plan, you may save by choosing an in-network dentist.

To find out if your plan will cover the cost, contact your benefits carrier before you schedule an appointment. Ask for details on what is and isn't covered so you can make the best decision for your budget. For example, your plan may cover a second consultation but not a second set of x-rays.

## How can I find a second dentist?

To find a reliable dentist for a second opinion, ask your friends and family members for recommendations. You can also browse online reviews, call your local dental society or speak with someone at a local dental school. To find an in-network dentist, check out Delta Dental's dentist directory at [deltadentalins.com](http://deltadentalins.com), which includes Yelp reviews to help you decide.

Get the most out of your appointment by creating a list of questions to ask.

Here are some examples:

- What is your diagnosis?
- What treatments are available?
- How would these treatments improve my dental health?
- What are the risks associated with each option?
- Will I need future treatment?

## How do I prepare for my appointment?

Before you visit the second dentist for a consultation, ask your current dental office for your dental records, including recent x-rays. This will give the second dentist the background details needed to make an educated evaluation.

5

## dental tips for school sports

School sports have begun, and players are hitting the field. Through all the ups and downs, don't let your kid's oral health get put on the bench. Follow these five tips to maintain terrific teeth from the first practice to the final buzzer.





1

### Always wear a mouthguard

Wearing a mouthguard can protect against chipped teeth, lip cuts and jaw damage. There are three kinds of mouthguards: ready-made, boil-and-bite and custom. Ready-made and boil-and-bite mouthguards are available at retail stores. Choose a boil-and-bite mouthguard for a better fit, or ask your dentist for a custom mouthguard to get the best fit. Check if your dental plan covers mouthguards.



2

### Choose water to hydrate

Water is the best way to hydrate during practices and games. Not only does it stave off dehydration, it can also reduce your chance of cavities.



3

### Fuel up like an oral health all-star

Nutrition is a huge part of athletic performance. Great sources of carbohydrates for sustained energy include whole-grain breads, vegetables, fruits, beans and legumes. And don't forget high-protein foods like chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, dairy and nuts.



4

### Keep teeth and mouthguards clean

If not cleaned regularly, mouthguards can get pretty foul. Make sure your kids brush their teeth before popping in their mouthguards and after taking them out. They should also wash their mouthguards, too. Follow your dentist's instructions or the guidelines on the packaging.



5

### Be prepared for a mouth injury

Athletes who play a high-contact sport are at a higher risk for dental injuries. About 13 to 39% of all dental injuries are caused by athletic activities, according to a study published in the *Journal of the American Dental Association*. Be prepared for this worst-case scenario by knowing where to go, what number to call and how your plan covers dental emergencies.



# JUICY

NOTHING  
SPREADS IT  
QUITE LIKE  
A SMILE.

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Smiles are such simple gestures, yet they're so powerful. That's why Delta Dental protects more smiles than anyone. As the nation's leading dental insurance carrier, we make it easy to keep your smile healthy with specialized expertise and the largest network of dentists. **Start protecting your smile today by choosing your plan at [deltadentalins.com](https://deltadentalins.com).**