

grin!

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

summer
2016

volume 5, issue 2

know before you go:
your dental benefits on vacation

**toothsome
travel tips**

**gold-medal
mouths**

**smile-friendly
concessions**



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June

Did you know that grinding or clenching your teeth can lead to headaches? June is **National Migraine and Headache Awareness Month**. Talk with your dentist if you think teeth grinding or clenching may be contributing to your headaches.



July

July 6 is **National Kissing Day**. Keep your breath minty-fresh by stocking up on sugar-free mints or gum!

August

Smart athletes at the Summer Olympics protect their teeth with mouthguards. **Check out page 6 for more about protecting your teeth while playing sports.**



Tata Chen / Shutterstock.com

two-word
answers

Q: How wide is the widest mouth?

A: 6.7 inches





on topic with dr. kohn

the importance of mouthguards

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.

Boxers were the first to use athletic mouthguards, and professional boxing was also the first to require mouthguards in competition in the 1920s. The risk for injury is pretty obvious for sports like boxing, but there are numerous sports and recreational activities where mouth protection can minimize the risk of tooth and mouth injury. Millions of teeth are knocked out, displaced and fractured each year due to sports and leisure injuries. Delta Dental reminds parents and athletes that dental injuries can be easily prevented by wearing a mouthguard that fits properly. Custom mouthguards made at the dentist's office are typically more comfortable, but the widely available and budget-friendly boil-and-bite or pre-sized models work well, if worn regularly.

mouth-friendly recipe: watermelon feta blackberry skewers

These refreshing watermelon bites are sure to be a hit at any summer gathering. You'll get a dose of calcium from the feta cheese, while the watermelon and blackberries contain vitamin C, which is good for gums. Bonus: Assembling them is a snap!

Ingredients:

1 small watermelon, cut into 1-inch cubes
6 ounces feta cheese, cut into 1-inch cubes
Blackberries
Small wooden skewers

Directions:

Place one cube of watermelon, one cube of feta cheese and one blackberry on each skewer. Chill until ready to serve, or enjoy immediately!



readers ask, we answer

Lauren asks:

“I’ve noticed there are quite a few floss options available. Are any of them better than the tried-and-true spool of floss?”

Hi, Lauren. You’re right – there are many different floss types, and most serve different purposes. For example, waxed and unwaxed nylon flosses come in various widths and flavors. Monofilament floss tends not to shred as easily. There are also Y- or U-shape plastic holders to help people who can’t wrap floss around their fingers. Extra-wide dental tape and floss threaders can be helpful for people with a lot of bridgework or wide gaps between their teeth. All these devices and floss types work equally well, as long as they are used at least once per day! The best kind of floss to use is the one that’s most comfortable for you and addresses your specific dental needs. There’s nothing wrong with a good, old-fashioned spool of unwaxed nylon floss, if that’s what you prefer.



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





gold-medal mouths

All eyes will be on the Summer Olympics in Rio this August. In addition to checking out the amazing performances, games and matches, we'll be watching something else: the athletes' mouths. Without proper protection for their teeth, athletes run the risk of damaging their beautiful smiles – and their oral health.



Professional and amateur athletes commonly don mouthguards during contact sports. If you tune in to Olympic volleyball, soccer, rugby, basketball and martial arts, for example, you'll likely find at least a few athletes sporting smile safety gear. It makes sense – mouthguards can help prevent broken teeth, cuts on the lips and tongue, and jaw injuries. In fact, most mouth injuries occur when athletes don't wear mouthguards. So, when players know their sports involve taking hits, they're more likely to protect their smiles.

However, even sports that don't require direct contact with other players can cause mouth injuries. A gymnast who misses the mark could collide face-first with a bar or the floor. Cyclists involved in crashes could easily hit their mouths on the pavement or their bikes. And weightlifters should consider what might happen if their teeth come into contact with a barbell.

Of course, playing any sport comes with a certain amount of risk. But while bruises heal and broken bones mend, teeth don't grow back – and athletes are **60 times more likely to injure their teeth when they're not wearing mouthguards.**

If you have an aspiring gold medalist in your home, don't worry – there's no need to spend Olympic-size bucks on a mouthguard. Stock mouthguards can be found in most sports stores; they are held in place by clenching the teeth together. "Boil-and-bite" mouthguards, also found in retail stores, fit better because after they're softened by boiling, they conform to athletes' mouths. Custom-fit mouthguards made by your dentist may be more expensive, but are usually the most comfortable.

Regardless of who goes home with hardware after the Summer Olympics, athletes who wear mouthguards deserve gold medals for protecting their smiles.





mad for mouthguards

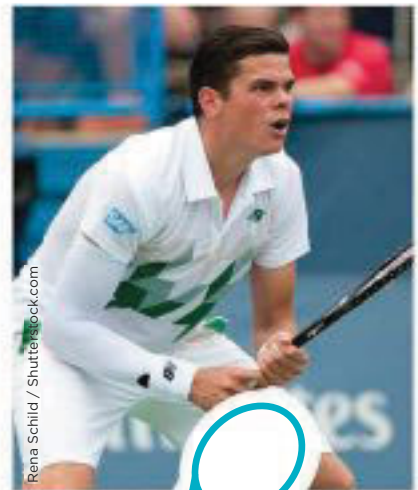
You don't have to watch the Olympics to spot sports figures donning mouthguards. These professional athletes also have a lot of game when it comes to protecting their teeth.



Boxer **Floyd Mayweather** spends more than \$25,000 on each mouthguard. That includes unique designs (jewels, gold flakes and one with a \$100 bill embedded inside), cross-country trips for fittings and extensive testing.



NBA superstar **Stephen Curry** is so well-known for chewing on his mouthguard that the habit is featured in the video game *NBA 2K16*.



Tennis isn't a contact sport, but **Milos Raonic** wears a mouthguard during matches anyway. It prevents him from grinding his teeth while he plays.

history of oral health: dental phobias

Afraid of the dentist? You're not alone. Afraid of brushing your teeth? Well, that's quite rare. Check out these four phobias related to oral health.



Odontophobia: fear of dentistry and receiving dental care



Halitophobia: fear of bad breath



Odontarrupophobia: fear of brushing teeth



Philemaphobia: fear of kissing



TOOTHsome *Travel Tips*

Whether you're enjoying a hammock on a beach or kicking your feet up by the pool, summer is the perfect time to shirk your responsibilities and engage in a little R&R. But no matter how relaxed you get, you should never slack off on your oral health routine.

To help keep your smile sparkling, we assembled a few tips on caring for your teeth while you travel.



Heading out on a long road trip? Keep floss, a toothbrush and a tube of toothpaste in the glove compartment. They'll be easily accessible when you want to clean your teeth at a rest stop after snacking. Road trip or not, it's not a bad idea to have these in your car for emergency touch-ups, just in case.

Travel cases for toothbrushes are great – they help prevent the bristles from touching surfaces that could transfer bacteria. But try to air-dry your toothbrush before storing it in the case. If drying time is not possible, before stowing your brush, give the bristles a pat with a dry paper towel or washcloth, or a quick blast from a hair dryer. A moist environment can lead to bacterial growth.





If you hop on an airplane, don't forget that toothpaste and mouthwash are considered liquids or gels, so the amount you carry on the plane is limited. This means they need to be in containers that are 3.4 ounces or less. Otherwise, you'll have to throw them away when going through security. Of course, you can also pack them in your checked luggage. Either way, consider safely storing them in sealable plastic bags so they don't leak on clothes or electronics.



While flying, you may experience a toothache that wasn't there just minutes before. If your getaway includes scuba diving, you could also experience this condition during your dive. The air pressure in the plane or while you're diving – the same reason your ears sometimes hurt – can make teeth with defective fillings, tooth decay or other problems ache a little, or even make your sinuses throb a bit. That ache is known as barodontalgia, more commonly called "flyer's toothache." There's not much you can do to alleviate this condition. Although the ache will likely go away on your trip, you should schedule a checkup with your dentist when you return.

Most important: Don't stray from your oral health routine. You may be on vacation, but periodontal disease and bacteria aren't. Stick to brushing twice and flossing once daily to keep your smile picture perfect.

A person is relaxing in a red hammock on a sandy beach at sunset. They are holding a tablet that displays a website with a photo of a person. A white sun hat is in the foreground. The background shows the ocean and a distant shoreline under a warm, orange sky.

know before you go: your dental benefits on vacation

Make sure you know what to do if you need to add a trip to the dentist to your travel plans.

Before vacationing, it's always wise to brush up on your benefits know-how – dental, medical and otherwise – so you're prepared if you need to seek treatment on the go. Wherever your travels take you this summer, you're most likely covered by your dental benefits plan. Delta Dental's extensive dentist networks mean there are thousands of dental offices nationwide that provide the same level of benefits and services you receive at home.*

You'll save the most by visiting a Delta Dental network dentist. In-network dentists have agreed to pre-established fees for Delta Dental members. **No matter where you are in the U.S., you can locate an in-network dentist by using our Find a Dentist tool at deltadental.com or on our free mobile app.** Simply type in a city or ZIP code to receive a list of nearby network dentists. There are more than 155,000 in-network dentists in the U.S., so there's bound to be one close to where you are vacationing.


If you have questions about your coverage, contact Delta Dental before you travel.

*Delta Dental PPOSM and Delta Dental Premier[®] allow you to visit any licensed dentist. Under the DeltaCare[®] USA plan, you usually need to visit a network dentist except when using out-of-area emergency benefits. Your plan may have an exception for emergency care. Confirm benefits, eligibility and network participation before visiting the dentist.




Smile-Friendly CONCESSIONS

From professional baseball games to days at the Little League® field and even trips to the state fair, concession stand cuisine is pretty commonplace over the summer. Although most concessions aren't the best for your smile, there are plenty of choices that are more smile-friendly than cotton candy and funnel cakes.



Peanuts are a tasty snack – and a great source of protein, manganese and vitamin E. Just make sure you don't use your teeth to crack open their shells!

Hamburgers are fine for your teeth. Consider adding **cheese, lettuce and tomato**, which will provide a healthy dose of calcium and vitamins C and K.



Hot summer days call for cool, refreshing drinks. Quench your thirst with **water or unsweetened iced tea** instead of sodas and sports drinks. Not only are they better for your teeth, they also keep you hydrated during warm weather. Just be aware that iced tea has the same teeth-staining properties as hot tea.

Here's welcome news for chocoholics: When nothing but a sweet treat will do, chocolate is the best way to satisfy that craving. It doesn't cling to teeth like chewy and sticky candies do. When sugar sticks to enamel for a long time, it can cause bacteria growth, and, eventually, cavities. That means you should opt for a **chocolate candy bar** instead of gummy candies or sweets with caramel or toffee.



Plan ahead and bring your own snacks from home. **String cheese, fresh fruit and nuts**, as well as **refillable water bottles**, are easily portable and are allowed in some ballparks and fairgrounds. Just be sure to check the facility's food and drink policy before you go – or be prepared to take your snacks back to the car.



keeping you covered: **know your score**

Do you have a couple of minutes? Great! You have all the time you need to receive a free oral health report for yourself or your children to share with your dentist.

Delta Dental's free online risk assessment tool, myDentalScore, asks a series of questions about topics such as family history and current health status and habits. Your answers to these questions will help determine your oral health risk, including risk for tooth decay, gum disease and oral cancer. You will receive an easy-to-understand assessment based on your answers that can be printed and shared with your dentist at your next visit. Your dentist can discuss the results with you in detail and come up with a plan that's customized to your specific needs.

From gum disease to tooth decay, oral health problems are more common than you may think. myDentalScore helps identify risk factors, so you can take preventive action and avoid problems before they become serious.



Ready to get your score? Visit mydentalscore.com/deltadental.

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. Linda Vidone of Brookline, MA.

When did you decide you wanted to be a dentist? My mother took me to a dentist when I was 7 because I said I wanted to be a dentist. My dentist found cavities at that first appointment, and I was excited because that meant I got to come back for more dental visits. I guess I've always had a fascination with teeth, and I can honestly say I'm now more fascinated than ever.

What dental advancements are you especially grateful for? I'm grateful that dentistry is moving in the direction of treating diseases rather than just filling teeth.

What's your favorite dental joke? Did you hear about the dentist who married a manicurist? They fight tooth and nail!

If you could tell patients to stop doing one thing, what would it be? I would like people to stop saying something difficult is like "pulling teeth" – for me, pulling teeth is really fast and easy!

Any funny stories from the dental chair? One day a patient fell asleep while I was performing scaling and root planing in our front operator. He was even snoring away! We didn't realize we were that relaxing.



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



dental benefits on the go

Logging in to Delta Dental's free mobile app provides quick and easy access to coverage information, recent claims and even your ID card. Looking for an in-network dentist? Our app can help. You can search for a dentist by network, dental specialty, location or a provider's last name. And by clicking on a dentist's name, you can view additional information, add the dentist to your contacts and get directions to the dental office.

Download our free app today using your Apple or Android device!

