make 2013 your healthiest year yet

how to bust bad oral health habits for good

five things to know before you swish

it’s a new year, baby
oral health tips for little ones

lip service upkeep for your kisser
mouthing off

We want to hear from you! Send your response to this issue’s question to grin@deltadental.com and put “Mouthing Off” in the subject line. Giving us your two cents could win you a Sonicare™ toothbrush! Here’s this issue’s question:

“Do you experience temperature sensitivity with your teeth? How do you deal with it?”

In our last issue, we asked readers what secrets they have for avoiding cold and flu germs. Here’s what they said:

“We wash our hands, drink lots of water, exercise, and sleep — and have lots of fun!”
– Melissa M.

“I’m cruising to Antarctica this winter, so there will be fewer people there to carry germs! Onboard the ship, I’ll try to stay out in the fresh air and avoid the buffet table!”
– Jennifer C.

“By getting plenty of rest, using mouthwash every day and eating healthy.”
– Flossy C.

“Besides taking vitamins, I drink apple cider vinegar on a daily basis.”
– Suzanne S.
readers ask, we answer

Sheila writes:

“I have a hard time getting my 5-year-old son to brush before bedtime. Is there anything I can do to make it less of a battle?”

Hi, Sheila. It can be a challenge getting 5-year-olds to cooperate with anything, especially something that’s not playtime. That being said, anything you can do to make it seem more like play and less like a chore will probably work to your benefit. Try a toothbrush with fun features, like lights or music. Bonus: These little gimmicks can also help keep your little one engaged for the recommended two minutes while reminding him to take care of all four quadrants of his mouth. Allow your son to pick out his own toothbrush and he may find brushing with a favorite character to be more motivating.

Here’s another thought: Switch roles by letting your son brush your teeth with your toothbrush before you help him brush his teeth with his toothbrush. Not only does it make a daily routine different, it will also demonstrate that you practice what you preach.

If these tips don’t help, be sure to mention your son’s reluctance to brush to the dentist at his next appointment. Although we know mom knows best, sometimes a little outside influence will do the trick. Good luck!

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

1872
Wild West gunslinger Doc Holliday graduates from the Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery.

1893
Dr. Thomas Bramwell Welch’s new grape juice is a hit at the Chicago World’s Fair. The doctor and his son close their dental practices to build the Welch’s brand full time.

1972
Olympic swimmer Mark Spitz is accepted to dental school at Indiana University. He wins seven Olympic gold medals the same year and decides not to pursue a career in dentistry.

1984
NBA player Steve Green starts his own dental practice in Fishers, Indiana.

2001
Jack Miller, aka “the racing dentist,” an Indy 500 driver and practicing dentist, retires from racing after sustaining injuries in a 13-car pileup.

2007
Japanese pop band GReeeeN debuts while all four members are in dental school. They perform with their faces hidden so as not to interfere with their day jobs.

1872
1972
2007
the history of
oral health: when dentistry is just a day job

1893
1984
2001

1893
1984
2001

1893
1984
2001

Whole-Wheat Pancakes with Fresh Fruit and Low-Fat Yogurt

- ¾ cup whole-wheat pastry flour
- ¾ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 2 Tbsp sugar
- ¼ tsp salt

- ½ cup liquid egg substitute
- 1 cup fat-free milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Low-fat yogurt
- Fruit

Preheat griddle. Whisk dry ingredients in a medium bowl. Add egg substitute, milk and vanilla extract, and whisk until smooth. Spray griddle with cooking spray. Ladle ¾ cup of batter onto preheated griddle and cook for 3 to 4 minutes or until golden. Top with low-fat yogurt and your favorite fruit. Enjoy!

Grill
• an oral health publication brought to you by Delta Dental
When the clock strikes midnight on New Year’s Eve, many people vow to make big changes in the upcoming year. Improving your oral health doesn’t take a large commitment and can be easy to do. With just a few minutes dedicated to daily dental health, you can spend next New Year’s Eve dazzling your date with your sparkling smile. Here are a few resolutions to get you started.

**MAKE 2013 YOUR HEALTHIEST YEAR YET**

**BUMP UP YOUR BRUSHING.**

If you’re not already brushing twice daily, now is a great time to start. If you tend to skip the evening session, work it into your bedtime routine. Brushing before you hit the hay helps keep detrimental debris from clinging to your teeth overnight. It’s also best to make sure bristles are spending enough quality time with your teeth. Though two minutes is recommended, most people invest just 46 seconds per brushing session.

**TAKE YOUR TOOTHBRUSH TO WORK.**

Already brushing twice daily? Congrats! For bonus points, keep a brush at the office so you can freshen up after power lunches (or microwave meals). You can even skip toothpaste for this “extra” third session.

**FOLLOW THROUGH WITH FLOSSING.**

One in 10 people say they never floss. If you’re holding out, what are you waiting for? With just a couple of minutes and about 18 inches of floss, your teeth will be cleaner and healthier. (And your breath will benefit, too.) Flossing is the single best way to remove plaque from between your teeth where the toothbrush can’t reach, so make sure it’s part of your daily oral health regimen.

**NIP NAIL BITING IN THE BUD.**

It’s not only bad for your manicure, but it’s not doing your teeth any favors, either. Nail nibbling has been linked to oral health problems such as teeth grinding and jaw clenching, which can lead to facial pain and sensitive teeth. Because it’s not as tempting to gnaw on neat nails, try to take care of jagged edges, hangnails and ragged cuticles. You can also try an instant reminder: Coat your nails with a clear, bitter-tasting polish to deter you from chewing.

**DROP IN ON YOUR DENTIST.**

Been awhile since your last dental appointment? Here’s a resolution you can cross off your list in the next five minutes: Call your dentist and schedule a checkup. If a phobia is keeping you from visiting, you’re not alone — more than 20 million Americans are afraid of the dentist. Discuss your fear with your dentist so he or she can help. If it’s been a really long time since you last wore a dental bib, take comfort in the fact that modern dentistry has come a long way. Not only has pain management improved but also many practices offer soothing touches such as TVs, pillows, blankets, aromatherapy and music.

**JUST SAY NO TO TOBACCO.**

This one isn’t quite as easy to conquer, but it’s one of the most important. In addition to decreasing your risk for oral cancer, kicking the habit can decrease your risk for gum disease, tooth discoloration, bad breath and swollen gums. So, make a plan. Set a date, such as “I’m going to quit on February 1,” instead of “I’m going to quit smoking this year.” Discuss your cessation plan with your physician or dentist. Join a support group, and don’t be shy about asking your friends, family and co-workers for encouragement.

**HOW TO BUST BAD ORAL HEALTH HABITS FOR GOOD**

When the clock strikes midnight on New Year’s Eve, many people vow to make big changes in the upcoming year. Improving your oral health doesn’t take a large commitment and can be easy to do. With just a few minutes dedicated to daily dental health, you can spend next New Year’s Eve dazzling your date with your sparkling smile. Here are a few resolutions to get you started.
IT’S A NEW YEAR, BABY!

ORAL HEALTH TIPS FOR LITTLE ONES

To say new parents are busy is an understatement. Between diaper changings, frequent feedings and not-so-frequent naps, new parents often don’t realize that it’s never too early to help little ones get started on the path toward a lifetime of good oral health.

NEWBORN

Even though most babies are born without teeth, they still need oral health care. From day one, wipe your baby’s gums with a clean cloth, especially after feedings and before bed, to keep the mouth free of bacteria. This keeps gums healthy and clean, of course, and it also establishes a good routine from the start.

INFANT

Once your child gets his or her first tooth, typically sometime around 6 months, it’s time to start brushing. All you need is a baby toothbrush and some water; fluoride toothpaste is not recommended. Up to about age 6, children have a tendency to swallow most of the toothpaste put on the brush. Swallowing too much fluoride while adult teeth are developing under the gums can lead to white spots or lines on the teeth called dental fluorosis. A child who accidentally consumes too much fluoride toothpaste may also complain of a tummy ache. When your child does start brushing with “grown-up” toothpaste around the age of 2 or 3, a pea-size amount is all that’s needed.

When your child has two teeth that touch, it’s time to start flossing to ensure that food particles don’t get trapped between them. Floss picks can come in handy as well. They’re available in fun colors and flavors, and may be easier to maneuver between small teeth than long strands of string.

BABY

It’s tempting to soothe your little one to sleep with a bottle or sippy cup of milk, formula or juice, especially once he or she is able to handle it with no assistance. Unfortunately, the sugars in all of those drinks — yes, even milk — can cause tooth decay when left on enamel all night. If your baby finds it soothing to suck on a bottle or sippy cup while drifting off, it’s fine to provide water.

Children should have their first dentist appointment by the time they’re blowing out the candle on their first birthday cake — or six months after the first tooth erupts, if you have an early bloomer. At the first appointment, the dentist will check to make sure teeth are developing the way they should be and answer any questions that you may have. This is a great way to get your youngster comfortable with going to the dentist. Visit DentistBy1.com to pledge to take your child to the dentist and help an underprivileged child get an oral health kit.

Swallowing too much fluoride while adult teeth are developing under the gums can lead to white spots or lines on the teeth called dental fluorosis.
Mouthwash can be a great supplement to your daily routine of brushing and flossing. Here are five things to know before you swish.

1. Some mouthwashes work mainly by reducing bad breath and giving your mouth a “fresh” feeling or pleasant taste, but this effect is temporary. These types of mouthwashes don’t “cure” bad breath, so if your mouth is chronically stinky, seek out the cause instead of just trying to mask it. Suspects include certain medications, periodontal (gum) disease or other illnesses. Check with your dentist for diagnosis and advice.

2. Many mouthwashes have a high percentage of alcohol, which can cause a burning sensation in your cheeks, mouth or gums. If this happens to you, don’t give up on mouthwash entirely; try one that’s alcohol-free. Alcohol is not the active ingredient in mouthwash, so non-alcohol brands work just as well.

3. Mouthwashes that claim to fight cavities should contain fluoride. These may be specifically formulated as “anti-cavity” and have been proven to help prevent tooth decay in children and adults. Over-the-counter rinses without fluoride don’t fight cavities.

4. Mouthwashes that claim to kill the bacteria that cause plaque, gingivitis and periodontitis (more advanced gum disease) contain antimicrobial agents that temporarily reduce the number of bacteria in your mouth. Some mouthwashes also multi-task to prevent tooth decay by adding fluoride to the mix.

5. If your child is under the age of 6, save the mouthwash for later years. Young children who don’t totally get the concept of “swish and spit” are at risk for getting an immediate upset stomach due to certain medications, periodontal (gum) disease or other illnesses. Check with your dentist for diagnosis and advice.

Over-the-counter rinses without fluoride don’t fight cavities.
brushing up

Ever wonder what your dentist is really thinking? Grin! wanted to find out too, so we talked to Dr. Kara Morgan of Morgan Family Dentistry in Arkansas.

Do you brush and floss as much as you recommend?
Absolutely! I spend a lot of my day correcting problems caused by poor home care, so I’m somewhat obsessive when it comes to my own teeth.

If you could tell patients to stop doing one thing, what would it be?
Stop ingesting so much sugar! Simple sugars give the bacteria in your mouth the fuel they need to cause decay. Soda consumption is one of the biggest problems that I see in children as well as adults. Sipping on soda all day long constantly exposes your teeth to acid and sugar, which leads to cavities. If you are going to consume soda or other sugary food, do it at mealtime and be sure to brush afterward.

In your opinion, which celebrity has the best smile?
Matthew McConaughey

Any funny stories from the dental chair?
The first day my practice was open, my dental representative came to the office early to deliver a loaner sterilizer. He loaded all of my brand-new instruments into the sterilizer and started it. A few minutes later, I began to smell smoke. We opened the door to find all of my brand-new instruments on fire because he had forgotten to put water in the sterilizer. We were still fanning the smoke out the back door as the first patient was walking in. Needless to say, it was a very stressful first day!

What’s your favorite dental joke?
Q: What does the dentist of the year get?
A: A little plaque.

Keeping You Covered — dental insurance lingo, decoded

Does your dental insurance Explanation of Benefits sometimes seem as if it’s written in a foreign language? Let us help you decipher one of those terms.

In-Network
Visiting an in-network dentist — a dentist who has a contractual agreement with Delta Dental to provide services to plan subscribers — can save you time and money.

Network dentists also must meet credentialing standards. This provides subscribers with additional peace of mind that they’re receiving health care from a qualified professional.

Accessing the Delta Dental PPO® network offers the lowest out-of-pocket fees and the richest benefits. Visiting a dentist in the Delta Dental Premier® network also offers discounts and protection from additional billing, with the benefit of a larger selection of dentists. If you choose to visit an out-of-network dentist, you may be subjected to higher fees.

Finding an in-network dentist is easy. More than four out of every five dentists nationwide participate in a Delta Dental network. Visit DeltaDental.com to find a participating practice in your area or to see if your current dentist is in-network.