

May 2022

Oral Wellness Newsletter

Hello everyone! Here's our May newsletter. The content is easy to share - just use the "forward this email" button. Or highlight the text you want, then copy and paste it wherever you like. It's that simple.



Allergies leaving you dry?

If you suffer from seasonal allergies, you likely dread the start of spring! Many people experience the discomfort of sneezing, coughing, and congestion around this time of year, thanks to the pollination of trees and grass. And don't forget about the puffy eyes, itchy nose, and dry mouth. In fact, of all the issues allergies pose for your oral health, which can include irritated gums and tingly lips or tongue, dry mouth is the most common.

Think about it—when we're congested, we breathe through the mouth rather than the nose. This causes the mouth to become sticky and dry, a prime environment for cavity-causing bacteria to thrive. This is because saliva plays a critical role in washing away bits of food and plaque from the teeth. A lack of saliva [leaves the teeth susceptible](#) to bad breath, cavities, and even gingivitis.

In addition, lots of allergy medications can cause dry mouth. Although addressing the cause should be the first line of attack, [some things you can do](#) to relieve dry mouth are:

- Use sugar-free gum or candy
- Sip water regularly to keep mouth moist and stay hydrated
- Use sodium laurel sulfate-free (SLS) toothpaste
- Use an alcohol-free mouthwash

- Try an over-the-counter saliva substitute
- Sleep with a room humidifier on at night

It's important to keep up a good oral hygiene routine during allergy season, so don't forget to brush twice and floss once daily. Talking to your doctor about a long-term solution for your allergies also can help you maintain your oral health.

Allergies and asthma

[Allergies and asthma](#) often occur in tandem. When exposed to an allergen, the body releases antibodies, and the immune system releases chemicals that cause allergy symptoms described above. For some, this reaction causes asthma symptoms in the lungs and airways.

Allergic asthma is common, but getting it under control before symptoms become severe is crucial. Certain medications, allergy shots, and therapies can help, so talk with your doctor if your allergies trigger more severe, asthmatic symptoms.

[Using an inhaler](#) puts you at risk for dry mouth, cavities, and thrush. Rinsing your mouth and throat after each inhaler use can help keep your mouth moist. Be sure to keep your inhaler clean and dry, as well.

Read more about how [allergies affect your oral health](#).



Getting to the root

We've all heard of a root canal or know someone whose had one, but do you really know [what to expect](#) if you need one yourself? This common procedure is usually needed for a cracked tooth, injury to the tooth, a deep cavity, or issues caused by a previous filling. Usually performed by an endodontist a root canal is one example of endodontic treatment, or treating inside the tooth (in Greek, "endo" means inside and "odont" means tooth).

Temperature sensitivity, severe pain while chewing, or swollen and tender gums are signals that a root canal may be necessary. During the procedure, inflamed or infected pulp (the soft tissue inside the tooth) is removed, the inside of the tooth is carefully cleaned to eliminate bacteria, and then the tooth is filled and sealed to prevent reinfection and save the natural tooth.

Depending on the condition of the tooth, the procedure can be completed in one to two visits. Anesthesia is administered, but a root canal is no more painful than getting a filling or having your wisdom teeth removed. Some patients experience soreness or mild discomfort for a few days following.

What's a crown?

Dental crowns, or “caps,” are placed on top of teeth when a filling becomes too large or a tooth is too badly broken down. A crown also can be used for cosmetic purposes or to cover a dental implant or tooth treated with a root canal. Crowns are made from metal, porcelain, ceramic, or resin.

If you need a root canal, you’ll almost always need a crown, particularly for molars in the back of the mouth. But, getting a crown does not require a root canal; the latter is reserved for more seriously infected teeth. Read more about crowns [here](#).

Some dental offices can provide same-day crowns, but the procedure could require two visits. If so, at the first the tooth is filed down to accommodate the crown and an impression of the tooth is made, which is then sent to a dental laboratory where the permanent crown is made. At the second visit, the permanent crown is cemented in place. Crowns last on average 5-15 years, but because the natural tooth structure is still present under the crown, it’s still important to practice good oral hygiene to prevent cavities.



Tooth or False

Calcium is taken from an expecting mother’s teeth to supplement the baby.

FALSE

The saying “gain a child, lose a tooth” is not true! The fetus does not absorb calcium from the mother’s teeth. All the needed nutrients come from the mother’s diet.

However, expecting moms can experience other issues that affect the teeth, like depletion of progesterone and fluctuating hormone levels. It’s especially important to take extra good care of your teeth during pregnancy because factors like these put your oral health at risk.

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