

October 2019

Oral Wellness Newsletter

Hello everyone, here's United Concordia Dental's October Oral Wellness newsletter. Share it by using the "forward this email" button in the top corner. Or highlight a few selected articles, then copy and paste them wherever you like. Enjoy!



Halloween candy boos and don'ts

It's spooky how much sugar kids consume during this annual candy free-for-all. According to Reader's Digest, the average trick-or-treater eats about 7,000 calories. That's equal to almost three cups of sugar! What's even scarier? Many candies can harm your child's teeth in ways beyond the excess sugar. Sour candies are acidic, which can wear away the outer tooth enamel. And chewy, sticky candies can dislodge braces and other orthodontic devices. Of course, you'll make sure they brush and floss after gobbling up their goodies. But first, check out our candy rating scale so you can sort out the least frightful options.

[Bone up](#) on the worst-to-best candy

3 candy alternatives that don't cause cavities

Gearing up for those masked rascals? Before you stock up in the candy aisle this Halloween, consider an alternative treat that's fun and dentist approved! Here are some ideas that will delight the neighborhood kids (and their parents, too).

- **Play dough** - Get creative with small play dough containers in orange, black, green and purple. Add in creepy surprises like spiders or plastic eyeballs.
- **Temporary tattoos** - Kids LOVE these stick-on, wash-off decorations! Look for zombie bites, monsters, bugs and bats.

- **Glow sticks** - Find packs of glow sticks at the dollar store. They're super-fun, plus they help keep kids safe when running around after dark.

[Get 6 more](#) treat ideas that aren't candy



Yummy mummy pizza bread

This cute, Halloween-themed dish is nutritious and delicious! Serve it as an afterschool snack, or dinner for picky eaters who only want pizza. Using wheat or grain bread boosts fiber. Plus, mozzarella cheese is low in carbs and calories, and an excellent source of protein, calcium and vitamin B12.

Ingredients:

- 4 Slices of white, wheat or multi-grain bread, crusts removed
- 14-oz. Jar of your favorite pizza sauce
- 6 Slices of mozzarella
- 4 Whole black olives, cut in half

Directions:

Toast bread for a crispy base. Using bread knife, remove crust and then spread pizza sauce on each slice. Cut each piece of mozzarella into 5 thin strips. Lay 5-7 cheese strips across each slice of bread randomly to look like mummy wrapping. Top with two black olive "eyes". Warm in toaster oven until cheese is slightly melted, or bake in low oven (325°) for about 5 minutes.

What's a dental hygienist?

In honor of National Dental Hygiene Month, we're celebrating the important role of a dental hygienist. Just like nurses help doctors, dental hygienists work alongside dentists, helping to care for patients.

Dental hygienists have earned specialized degrees and are licensed and registered in the state they work. They're oral health professionals trained to do more than just polish your pearly whites.

In many states, dental hygienists also...

- Screen for signs of cavities, gum disease and oral cancer
- Assist the dentist in numbing the tooth or mouth
- Take X-rays and impressions of teeth for oral appliances, dentures and crowns
- Educate on oral hygiene, cavity prevention, smoking cessation and proper nutrition

- Perform non-surgical treatments for gum disease such as scaling and root planing
- Apply fluoride and sealants

So take advantage of your dental hygienist's knowledge. Feel free to ask questions or talk about any concerns you have at your next appointment. As a conversation starter, take along the results from our online dental health assessment. Just answer a few simple questions to get a summary of your oral health status and possible risk factors, then print a copy for your dental hygienist and dentist to review.

[Take My Dental Assessment](#)

Breast cancer and your oral health

Gum disease is linked to an increased risk of breast cancer.[1] And many breast cancer survivors experience dental problems due to side effects from treatment.[2] Since October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we're sharing information to help everyone who has been diagnosed to take care of their mouths during treatment. We've collected breast cancer and oral health resources and tips. Plus, a guide for talking to your dentist if you're experiencing oral issues. Use this information yourself, or pass it on to someone you love.



[Learn](#) the oral side effects of cancer treatment

[Questions](#) to ask your dentist before treatment

Dealing with sleep apnea

Do you snore, choke or gasp loudly while sleeping? Wake up feeling tired and cranky? You may have sleep apnea, a common disorder in which breathing stops and starts during the night. Sleep apnea can be mild to moderate or severe, depending on how many times breathing stops.

When your breathing stops and you don't get enough air, the oxygen level in your blood drops. The sudden drop in blood oxygen can increase your blood pressure and strain your heart. So having sleep apnea can raise your risk of high blood pressure, heart attack and stroke. It may also increase your risk of type 2 diabetes.[3]

If your doctor thinks you have sleep apnea, you may be referred to an ear, nose and throat specialist for testing. If you're diagnosed with sleep apnea, treatment varies depending on the grade. Moderate to severe sleep apnea is typically treated by using a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine.

With CPAP therapy, you wear a mask over your nose and mouth, which delivers the air you need to breathe correctly. But sometimes, the air pressure from your CPAP can cause dry mouth and other oral issues.

In some cases, mild to moderate sleep apnea can be treated with a mandibular advancement device (MAD). A MAD adjusts your jaw and tongue to help keep your airway open. But these devices can also cause joint pain. Your dentist can recommend ways to treat dry mouth and other oral side effects of sleep apnea treatment.

[Learn](#) what side effects to watch for

Vaping myths revealed

Stories about the dangers of vaping are in the news almost daily. Vaping has become a serious issue for teens and adults alike.

Kids are drawn to vaping because the aerosol comes in tempting "flavors" like strawberry-watermelon, blue raspberry and pink lemonade. Kids tend to also mistakenly think vaping is safer than smoking. In fact, research shows that young people who use vaping devices, or e-cigarettes, are more likely to smoke in the future.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the aerosol users inhale isn't just harmless water vapor. It can contain nicotine, cancer-causing chemicals and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Sadly, the CDC recently linked vaping to eleven deaths and 530 cases of lung injury.

If you suspect your teen is into vaping, have a talk about the dangers. Then get ready to help them quit, which can be as tough as quitting smoking. Here are some resources that can help guide your journey to a nicotine-free teen.

[Read](#) the health risks of vaping

[How to](#) quit vaping for teens

[1] Periodontal Disease and Breast Cancer: Prospective Cohort Study of Postmenopausal Women; American Association of Cancer Research; 2015.

[2] National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research; 2019.

[3] National Sleep Foundation; 2019.

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