

July/August 2020

## Oral Wellness Newsletter

*Hello everyone! Here's our July/August newsletter. We've made the content 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.*



### **Phew, got mask mouth?**

Wearing a face mask helps keep you and people around you safer from sharing germs when you leave the house. But have you noticed a stinky smell under your cover-up?

Halitosis – better known as bad breath – can be an embarrassing problem to have, not to mention, unpleasant to live with under current safety guidelines that recommend wearing a mask or face covering to help stop COVID-19 from spreading. Oftentimes good, consistent oral hygiene is all it takes to freshen up the funky odor, but bad breath can also be a sign of a more serious health condition.

In honor of National Fresh Breath Day on August 6, we're sharing helpful ways to fight bad breath and make wearing a mask more comfy.

[Learn 4 ways to stop the stink](#)



## The right way to wear a mask

If your nose shows, you've got your mask on wrong. Same goes if your chin isn't covered or the sides are gapping open. If your face covering doesn't fit snugly over your nose, mouth and chin, your respiratory droplets can escape above, below or out the sides of your mask and into the air.

You may not think you're sick, but remember, not everyone who has COVID-19 shows symptoms. You can feel just fine and still spread the virus without realizing it.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, face coverings help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading it to others. Don't forget, the virus spreads mostly by the droplets that spray out of your mouth and nose when you talk, sneeze or cough. So, by wearing cloth face coverings and masks, you're helping to keep potentially infected droplets from reaching other people.

Masks are only effective if you wear them correctly, so check out some quick tips for wearing face coverings properly.

[Get 7 tips for mask safety](#)



## H<sup>2</sup>Ohhhhh, how delicious!

Staying hydrated is important, especially in the hot sun. While lemonade or sweet tea might sound refreshing, both are packed with sugar and acids that aren't good for your teeth. Luckily, we have your new go-to summer beverage.

Infused water is the perfect alternative to sweet thirst quenchers. You can mix and match your favorite fruits and veggies to create your own personalized flavor. While the ingredients are tasty, most of the health benefits come from the water itself. It's been shown to increase metabolism, improve digestion and boost your mood and energy levels.[1]

Enjoy this refreshing summer drink!

[Get the recipe](#)

### Ingredients:

Infused Water Flavor Combos

Lemon + Cucumber + Mint

Strawberries + Basil + Cucumber

Blueberries + Lemon + Lavender

Raspberries + Lime + Mint

Watermelon + Raspberries + Basil

### Directions:

Prep your ingredients, making sure to wash all produce and herbs.

Add your desired ingredients to a bottle or jar. Fill with water and seal with a lid.

Refrigerate for at least one hour. For a more intense flavor, refrigerate overnight.

*Brought to you by Have a Plant: Fruits and Veggies for Better Health*



## Breastfeeding benefits for baby (and mom)

Making the decision whether to breastfeed or formula feed your baby is a personal one. Breastfeeding in particular has many health benefits – and may also set your baby up for straighter teeth in the future. Since August is National Breastfeeding Month, we're celebrating all the wonderful ways breastfeeding is beneficial for both baby and mom.

Breast milk is naturally nutrient rich – filled with just the right amounts of the vitamins, protein, fat and sugar babies need to grow. It also contains antibodies that help fight off infection and prevent many illnesses. According to the March of Dimes, breastfed babies have fewer ear, lung and urinary tract infections.[2] They're also less likely to be overweight or have asthma, some cancers and diabetes later in life.[2]

And an American Academy of Pediatrics study found that babies who breastfed exclusively for at least 6 months were more protected against bite issues than babies who were not. In

fact, breastfed babies are 72% less likely to develop crowded teeth, overbites and other teeth alignment problems.[3]

When it comes to moms, breastfeeding is healthier physically and emotionally.[4] Moms who breastfeed lose weight faster after pregnancy, plus have fewer urinary tract infections and less chance of anemia.[4] Breastfeeding also produces soothing hormones that reduce stress and promote positive feelings.[4]

Breastfeeding can be a special time to nourish and bond with your baby. But it can also take a toll on your oral health. If you're nursing or plan to, here are 4 tips for taking care of your mouth so you can stay healthy and focused on your little one!

[Check out oral health tips for breastfeeding moms](#)



## Your best summer selfie smile

Summer is filled with reasons to smile. School's out, the sun is shining and you're in vacation mode. Get ready to capture and share your favorite summer moments. Here are three tips for sensational smiles in all those snapshots.

- 1. Smile naturally, don't clench your jaw**

Don't stress over trying to capture a movie-star smile. Relax, think happy thoughts and snap the smile that comes to you naturally. What's important is expressing your unique personality.

- 2. Show off soft, smooth lips**

Lips have thin skin and few oil glands, so they can dry out easily. Soften and protect them by applying lip balm with a good SPF. Or apply lipstick in a knockout shade that'll showcase your pearly whites.

- 3. Make sure your teeth are sparkling clean**

Don't let spinach photobomb your shot. Brush and floss, and rinse with water, to remove food particles that might be stuck between your teeth. Chewing sugarless gum stimulates saliva, which also helps to wash away food debris after you eat.

Time for a summer dental cleaning? Dentists are using extra personal protective equipment (PPE) to help keep patients safe during COVID-19, so you can feel secure getting back to routine care. Find out if you're due for an exam in your *MyDentalBenefits* account.

[Log into MyDentalBenefits](#)



## Watch your mouth this summer

Don't take a vacation from good oral care. Follow these tips to help keep your smile healthy:

- 1. Swim with your mouth closed**

Too much chlorine can erode your protective tooth enamel.<sup>[5]</sup> Teeth can become discolored, more sensitive and prone to decay.

- 2. Don't chew on ice**

Cold hard cubes can [crack or chip your teeth](#), break fillings and crowns, and damage the wires and brackets on braces. A habit of chewing ice can also be a sign of iron deficiency, so mention it to your doctor.<sup>[6]</sup>

- 3. Rinse after sweet treats**

Bacteria break down sugar in your mouth, creating acid that can damage enamel and cause cavities. Swish with water or mouthwash, or even chew sugarless gum.

- 4. Wear lip balm with SPF 30**

[Don't skip your lips](#). UV rays can cause skin cancer, even on your lips. Too much sun can also lead to wrinkles and a dry, flaky smile.

- 5. Prevent dental emergencies**

Wear a mouth guard during sports. Use scissors – not your teeth – to cut things. Don't chomp on hard candy and popcorn kernels. And [be prepared to handle dental emergencies](#), just in case they happen.

### [Need a dentist now?](#)

On vacation or out of town? Your plan provides in-network coverage at over 329,000 offices nationwide.

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[1] Detox Water Health Benefits and Myths; [Healthline](#); June 19, 2016

[2] [Breastfeeding is best](#); [marchofdimes.org](#); 2020

[3] [Exclusive Breastfeeding and Risk of Dental Malocclusion](#); Pediatrics; June 2015

[4] [The Benefits of Breastfeeding for Baby & for Mom](#); clevelandclinic.org; Jan. 2018

[5] [Erosive tooth wear](#); ada.org; August 2019

[6] [Craving and chewing ice: A sign of anemia?](#); mayoclinic.org; March 2018



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