

grin!®

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

fall
2017
volume 6, issue 3


Can charcoal
whiten your teeth?

5 ways to get
your toddler
to brush

Throw a deliciously creepy
HALLOWEEN PARTY

Say goodbye to
drilling... Say hello to
liquid fillings?





/ A smile can say
**YOU LOOK
AWFULLY FAMILIAR**

Every smile tells a story. And each one can say something powerful. As the nation's leading dental benefits provider, Delta Dental makes it easy to protect your smile with the largest network of dentists nationwide, quick answers and personalized service. **Learn more at deltadentalins.com.**

 **DELTA DENTAL**[®]

smile power[™]

grin!®

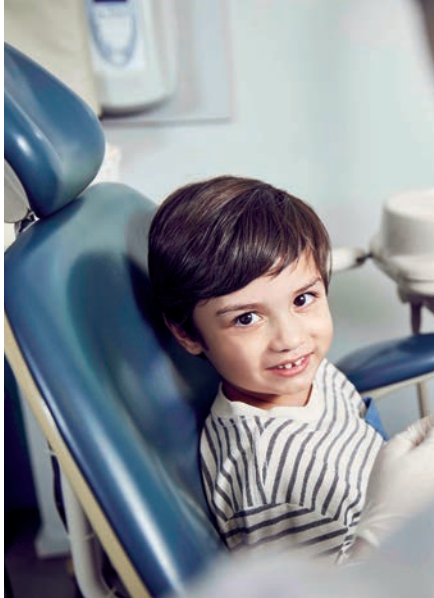
table of contents

- 4 on topic with dr. kohn:**
cavity-fighting liquid for kids
- 5 mouth-friendly recipe:**
pumpkin spice brownies
- 6 history of oral health:**
smiling in photographs
- 7 readers ask, we answer:**
bleeding gums while flossing
- 8 5 tips for getting toddlers to brush**
- 9 two-word answers**
- 13 dental trend spotlight:**
teeth-whitening charcoal tablets
and powder
- 14 updates in teeth tech**
- 15 how pre-treatment estimates work**
- 16 your fall smile list:**
10 to-do's that will make you grin



10 feature article
throw a deliciously creepy
HALLOWEEN PARTY



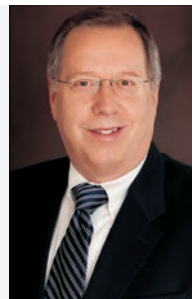


on topic with dr. kohn

something old, something new: a cavity-fighting liquid makes a comeback

Getting a filling can be a scary proposition for toddlers and their parents, but unfortunately, about a quarter of children ages 2 to 5 have tooth decay, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In serious cases, children end up in the operating room because they are too young to sit still for the filling process. However, help is on the way in the form of silver diamine fluoride (SDF), an antimicrobial liquid that can be brushed on cavities to stop further decay. The best part? No shots and no drilling! SDF is simply and painlessly dabbed into the cavity — no drilling or filling — and takes just a few minutes. While SDF has been around for decades, it has one major drawback that caused it to fall out of favor: It turns the decay black. While this may not be a problem on back molars, black areas on front teeth can be unsightly. Still, SDF has seen a comeback among pediatric dentists in recent years because it's an inexpensive way to buy some time for young children until they can cooperate for fillings — without requiring general anesthesia and the operating room.

Meet Bill Kohn, DDS, Delta Dental's Vice President of Dental Science and Policy. 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.





mouth-
friendly
RECIPE

pumpkin spice brownies

It wouldn't be fall without a pumpkin-flavored treat or two, but this one will satisfy your seasonal cravings without sacrificing your teeth.

ingredients:

brownie layer

1 ½ cups flour
½ cup oatmeal
½ cup cocoa powder
1 cup pumpkin puree
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 egg
2 tablespoons liquid stevia
1 cup milk

pumpkin layer

½ cup flour
½ cup pumpkin puree
½ teaspoon cinnamon
1 tablespoon liquid stevia
1 tablespoon milk

topping

2 tablespoons dark chocolate chips

directions:

- 1 Preheat oven to 375°F.
- 2 Combine all the ingredients for the brownie layer in a large bowl and mix until well combined.
- 3 Combine the ingredients for the pumpkin layer in a medium bowl, stirring until combined.
- 4 Pour the brownie mixture into a greased 8x8 baking pan, distributing evenly.
- 5 Layer the pumpkin mixture on top, spreading it evenly over the brownie base.
- 6 Sprinkle chocolate chips on top.
- 7 Bake for 30 minutes or until golden-brown. Cool for 30 minutes before slicing. Enjoy!

HISTORY OF ORAL HEALTH: smiling in photographs

Though saying “cheese” for a picture is common today, smiling for photographs is a relatively recent trend.



1847

One of the earliest photos of a person smiling for the camera is a picture of officers in the Mexican-American War.

1920s - 1930s

Smiling for photographs became the norm.

2017

Three out of four Americans¹ are more attracted to someone who smiles often — something to consider when posting dating profile pics!

DID YOU KNOW?

There may be several reasons for the lack of smiles in the past, including the long exposure times of early cameras and people hiding their poor dental health. Also, early photo sessions were a more formal affair, so people tended to pose as they would for an oil painting.



¹Delta Dental Adult Oral Health & Well-Being Survey, 2017.



readers ask, we answer

Melanie asks:

"My gums bleed when I floss. Should I be worried?"

Hi, Melanie. The short answer: It depends.

The long answer: If you don't floss regularly, you can expect to experience a bit of pink in the sink. When plaque builds up on your teeth, it irritates your gums and makes them more likely to bleed. Regular flossing reduces plaque, keeping your teeth and gums healthy. In fact, a study published in the *Journal of Periodontology* found that people who brushed and flossed daily experienced a 38% decrease in bleeding gums.

Another cause could be the type of floss you use or a rough flossing or brushing style. Switching floss or using a lighter touch may help resolve the problem. Try waxed floss that slides easily between your teeth, and avoid snapping the floss against your gums.

If you still experience daily bleeding, there could be a more serious culprit, such as severe gum disease, also known as periodontitis. If left untreated, this condition can damage the bone and tissues supporting your teeth.

If your gums keep bleeding, talk to your dentist. Your dentist can examine your gums for symptoms of periodontitis and recommend treatment to keep your mouth healthy.



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

5 tips for getting toddlers to brush



The fresh, clean feeling that comes with a good tooth-scrubbing session is enough to get most people to brush — but toddlers aren't "most people." According to pediatrician and author Dr. William Sears, toddlers are mainly motivated by having fun and being happy. If you've got a pint-sized protestor on your hands, your best bet is to make brushing a fun event. Sound challenging? These five ideas will help you get started.



1

Make it an event

When it's time to brush, gather the whole family in the bathroom and do it together. The more, the merrier! You can even crank a fun toothbrushing tune to make it a real party.

2



Try technology

It's recommended that everyone — kids *and* adults — brush twice a day for two minutes each time. Time can be a difficult concept for younger kids, but technology makes it easier. Look for a toothbrush equipped with music, lights or sound effects that play until it's time to rinse and spit. You can also download Delta Dental's free mobile app, which includes a toothbrush timer that plays music for two minutes while you brush.

3



Go old school

If futuristic timers and apps don't interest your child, go *back* in time instead. Purchase a 120-second sand timer. The sifting sand will fascinate kids and help show them how long to brush.

4



Practice makes perfect

Let your toddler practice on a doll or mouth model. Feeling brave? Let your tot practice on you with your toothbrush!

5



Reward their efforts

Develop a sticker chart and reward kids for hitting the mark for a week or a month. You can even add a fun seasonal spin with timely stickers such as pumpkins, ghosts and scarecrows!

TWO-WORD answers

Q: When do humans first start smiling?

A: The womb.

We start smiling, blinking and crying around 26 weeks gestation.



*"Never regret
ANYTHING THAT MADE
you smile."
- ANONYMOUS*



your guide to a sugar-free

HALLOWEEN

PARTY

At first glance, “healthy Halloween” seems to be more of a trick than a treat — but it’s easier to host a sugar-free shindig than you may think. From spooky snacks to ghoulish games and activities, we’ve got some frighteningly good ideas to keep your kids’ Halloween party healthy.

fang-friendly foods



FRUIT PHANTOMS AND PUMPKINS

Who knew ghosts could be so adorable? To make these cute fruits, peel bananas and cut them in half. Then add dark chocolate chips for the eyes and mouth. The pumpkins are even easier: Peel clementines or tangerines, then stick a sliver of celery in the top of each one to create a “stem.”

DEVILED EGG SPIDERS

These eggs may look devilish, but they taste heavenly — and they’re packed with protein. All you need are deviled eggs — your favorite recipe will work — and pitted black olives. After you’ve assembled the deviled eggs, slice the olives in half lengthwise. Use one half for the spider’s body, then slice the other half into thin slivers to create the spider’s legs. Arrange an arachnid on top of each egg as a deliciously creepy garnish.



CANDY CORN FRUIT PARFAIT

This sweet treat is healthier than the candy it resembles, and it’s a snap to assemble. Just use sugar-free rice pudding and yellow or orange food coloring to create candy corn-colored layers, then top with unsweetened whipped cream. Or, try pineapple chunks for the bottom layer, mandarin oranges as the middle and whipped cream on top.



hauntingly fun activities

CANDY TRADE-IN

Borrow an idea from dentists who offer a candy “buy-back” program for their patients. Hold your party the day after trick-or-treating or a school Halloween party, and allow kids to trade in pieces of candy for prizes. The more they trade, the better the prize!

PIN THE GRIN ON THE PUMPKIN

For this adapted version of pin the tail on the donkey, blindfolded partygoers try to attach a mouth to the proper place on a face of a grinless pumpkin. Feel free to use tape instead of thumbtacks or pins to protect little fingers — and your walls!



boo-tiful beverages



PUMPKIN SMOOTHIE

Pumpkins aren't just for carving — and this pumpkin smoothie will take much less time than crafting a jack-o'-lantern. Just blend these ingredients until smooth:

- ½ cup canned pumpkin
- ½ cup crushed ice
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- ½ cup milk

SUGAR-FREE HOT CHOCOLATE

This chocolaty brew is sure to be a hit with your little ghouls. Mix cocoa and salt in a mug. Using a separate container, microwave milk for 1 minute or until hot. Gradually add hot milk to cocoa mixture in mug, stirring until well blended. Stir in vanilla and sugar substitute, then top with freshly whipped cream.

- 1 tablespoon cocoa
- Dash of salt
- 1 cup milk
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla
- Stevia to taste
- Unsweetened whipped cream



GREEN SLIME

Kids will wonder what mad scientist dreamed up this creepy concoction — and then they'll ask for seconds! Just toss the ingredients below in a blender and blend until smooth. Then top with sugar-free whipped cream.

- 1 avocado
- Handful of baby spinach leaves
- 2 cups frozen pineapple
- 1 green pear, peeled and sliced
- 2 Granny Smith apples, peeled and sliced
- 32 ounces of water
- Stevia to taste
- Unsweetened whipped cream



ghoulish giveaways

If you're giving away party favors or goodie bags, there's no need to load kids up with more candy. These giveaways will make them smile — and keep those smiles healthy!

TRINKETS

- Pencils and erasers
- Stickers
- Spider rings
- Glow sticks
- Bubbles
- Temporary tattoos

ORAL HEALTH GOODIES

- Toothbrushes
- Mini toothpastes
- Containers of floss

SMALL TOYS

- Mini containers of Play-Doh
- Crayons
- Mini puzzles
- Bouncy balls

HAVE A HAPPY, HEALTHY HALLOWEEN - AND HAPPY HAUNTING!

DENTAL TREND SPOTLIGHT

teeth-whitening charcoal tablets and powder

Even we'll admit it — those YouTube videos of people brushing their teeth with black charcoal powder look pretty compelling. A toothy smile turns into a horror-movie-ready grin, all with the claim that a whiter smile is just around the corner.

But what's the science behind this fad? Will it fade in favor of other teeth whiteners, or could it actually whiten those faded smiles?

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Don't grab the briquettes from your grill. Activated charcoal is different — it has been heated until the material is extremely porous. Those pores can absorb harmful substances. For example, activated charcoal can be used to treat drug overdose or relieve the bloating from gas.

Proponents of charcoal for teeth whitening say these same absorption properties also remove stains from teeth. Users mix activated charcoal with water, apply it with a toothbrush and rinse after a few minutes.

WILL IT ACTUALLY WHITEN MY TEETH?

The short answer: probably not. Consumer reviews are mixed, and the dental community recommends using other methods. "There's no evidence at all that activated charcoal does any good for your teeth," said Kim Harms, DDS, American Dental Association spokesperson.

DOES IT HURT TO TRY IT?

As it turns out, activated charcoal might harm your teeth. When the grainy substance rubs against teeth, it has the potential to damage tooth enamel and gums. It may also increase tooth sensitivity. If you swap out your regular toothpaste with activated charcoal, you'll also miss out on cavity-fighting fluoride. While we don't recommend charcoal whitening, if you do try it, continue to use fluoride toothpaste as well.

In the end, there's no scientific evidence that activated charcoal actually works, Dr. Harms said, and there are better options that do. She recommends using standard, over-the-counter whitening products or in-office whitening treatments provided by your dentist. Talk to your dentist for a personalized recommendation.

The verdict: The future of activated charcoal whitening isn't too bright.



updates in TEETH TECH

Learn about the latest innovations in dental science.

resin cavity fillings

If you're one of the roughly 35 million Americans whose teeth chatter at the terrifying thought of seeing the dentist, this may be of interest to you: Instead of drilling into teeth to access decay, dentists can now fill certain cavities with liquid resin. Here's how it works:

- ① The dentist determines the decay is in a spot that works with resin — it must be a small cavity located between teeth, known as an interproximal cavity.
- ② A special tool is slid between the teeth to release the resin.
- ③ The resin hardens and restores the surface of the tooth.
- ④ The non-invasive treatment eliminates pain — and the need for anesthesia.

The catch: This method only works for small cavities between teeth. For those pesky cavities on top of teeth or larger ones that require more extensive filling, you'll still need the standard drill-and-fill routine for now.

tooth banking

Leaving baby teeth for the Tooth Fairy might not be the wisest choice. In 2003, the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research discovered that baby teeth and wisdom teeth contain potentially invaluable stem cells. As researchers explore the practical applications of dental stem cells, cryogenic freezing companies offer a way to store these teeth for future use, known as "tooth banking."

The benefits of dental stem cells are under debate. Research suggests that stem cells found in the soft tissue, or "pulp," of teeth can be extracted and repurposed. Potential applications include regrowing a permanent tooth that has been lost or damaged, reconstructing bone tissue and maybe even treatment for autoimmune diseases like multiple sclerosis.

Storing these teeth properly requires specific steps to preserve the usable tissue. If you're interested in exploring this option, reach out to tooth banks and your dentist for in-depth information on benefits, concerns, pricing and storage.





how pre-treatment estimates work

Wondering how much a major dental treatment will cost you? Ask for a pre-treatment estimate. This free service, also called a pre-determination or pre-authorization, gives you an approximate idea of how much a dental treatment will cost overall, and how that cost will be split between you and your dental plan.

Getting a pre-treatment estimate is easy. The first step is to have your dentist submit a proposed treatment plan and supporting x-rays (if relevant) to Delta Dental. After reviewing these documents and your specific benefits plan, Delta Dental will send an estimate to you and your dentist.

The estimate is based on your plan coverage, including covered services and your remaining annual maximum. Estimates are usually returned in a matter of days, but more complex treatments can take longer to assess.

Pre-treatment estimates are helpful when it comes to budgeting for dental procedures. They can also help determine how you and your dentist decide to proceed with a treatment. If a treatment plan is too pricey, your dentist may recommend an alternative approach. Estimates are most typically requested for costly procedures such as crowns, wisdom tooth extractions, bridges, dentures or oral surgery.

This service is only available for Delta Dental PPOSM and Delta Dental Premier[®] enrollees.

4 easy steps to get a pre-treatment estimate

- 1
Ask your dental office to request a cost estimate.
- 2
Dentist submits a treatment plan and supporting documentation to Delta Dental.
- 3
Delta Dental reviews the request and your benefits.
- 4
Receive a cost estimate from Delta Dental.

your fall *smile list*

These 10 autumnal to-do's are sure to make you grin!

- 1 Pick out a pumpkin, then carve or paint it.
- 2 Go for a hike. Be sure to crunch some leaves.
- 3 Roast pumpkin seeds in the oven.
- 4 Simmer cinnamon and spices in water on the stove to create potpourri.
- 5 Check out a fall farmers market for squash, sweet potatoes and pumpkin.
- 6 Drive around and look at Halloween decorations.
- 7 Go on a local historical or ghost tour.
- 8 Master a delicious fall recipe.
(Try our pumpkin spice brownies on page 5!)
- 9 Hit up a high school football game.
- 10 Host a chili cook-off.

