

# grin!

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

new year  
2013  
volume 1, issue 4

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



# grin!

DELTA DENTAL

## FEATURE ARTICLE

### it's a new year, baby

oral health tips for little ones

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## mouthing off

We want to hear from you! Send your response to this issue's question to [grin@deltadental.com](mailto: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:**

“

"Wash your hands, drink lots of water, exercise, and sleep — and have lots of fun!"

— Mariann 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.

”

# cavity-free calendar



## Happy New Year!

Now is a great time to start practicing good oral health habits. Vow to brush at least twice a day, become more familiar with flossing and make sure you and your family members have dental appointments scheduled.



## Children's Dental Health Month.

Celebrate by helping your child establish good oral health habits at a young age. Those habits are key to a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums.

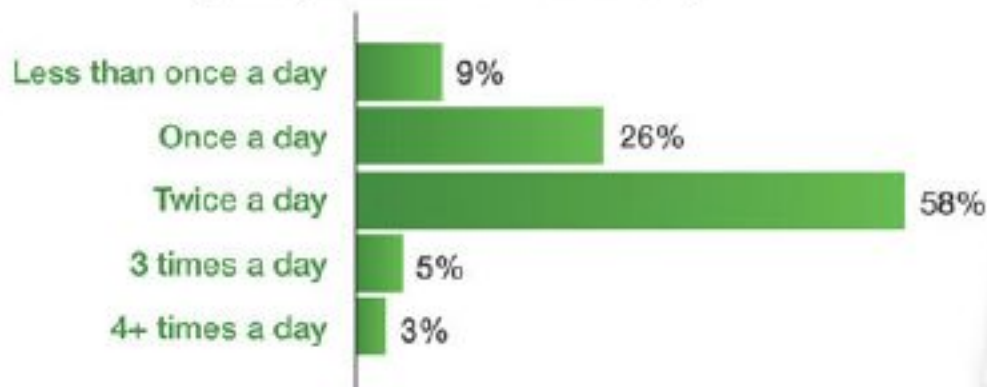


## National Sleep Awareness Week™ is March 4–10.

Quality sleep is important to your overall health. If yours is disrupted by teeth grinding or snoring, your dentist may be able to help.

## by the numbers

### How Often Does Your Child Brush His or Her Teeth? (among children who have teeth)



Sample Size: 838

Source: Delta Dental Children's Oral Health Survey, 2011

Total may not appear to add due to rounding.



# 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](mailto:grin@deltadental.com), and it could be featured in an upcoming issue!

## the history of oral health: when dentistry is just a day job

1872

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



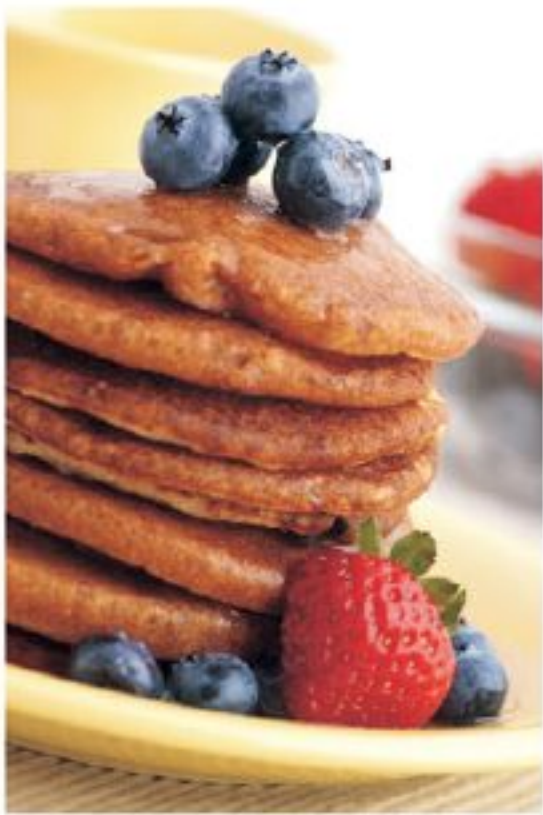
1893

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.



## mouth-friendly recipe

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

¾ cup whole-wheat pastry flour	½ cup liquid egg substitute
¾ cup all-purpose flour	1 cup fat-free milk
1 tsp baking powder	1 tsp vanilla extract
½ tsp baking soda	Low-fat yogurt
2 Tbsp sugar	Fruit
¼ tsp salt	

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 ⅔ 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!

**1984**

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



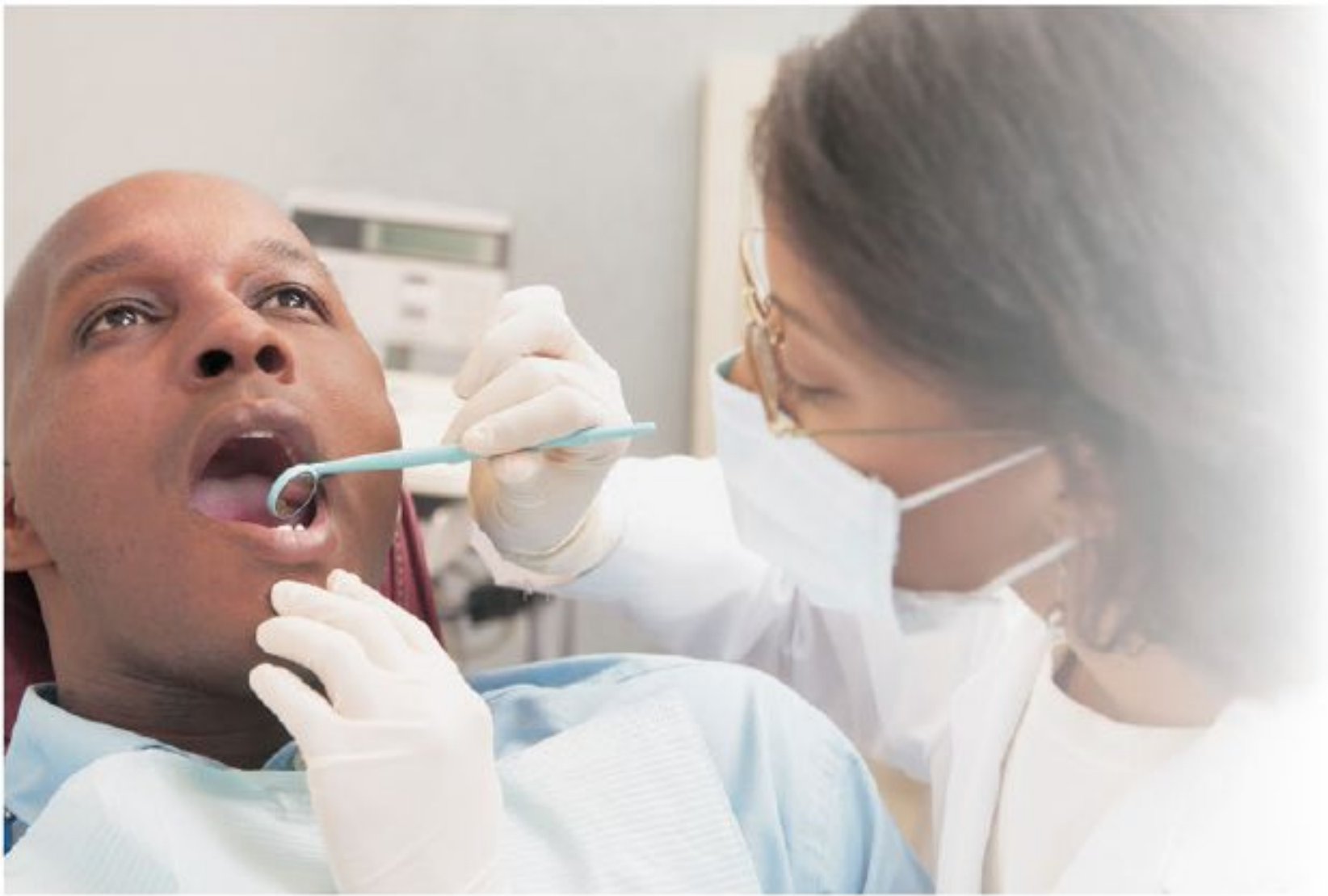
**2001**

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 GRreeeeN debuts while all four members are in dental school. They perform with their faces hidden so as not to interfere with their day jobs.





# HOW TO BUST BAD ORAL HEALTH HABITS FOR GOOD

## MAKE 2013 YOUR HEALTHIEST YEAR YET

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.

## 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.



# 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 down 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.

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**.

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.



# five things to know before you swish



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 or developing tooth fluorosis on their adult teeth if they swallow too much fluoride mouthwash. The same thing can happen to kids who swallow too much fluoride toothpaste. (See page 9 for more information about fluorosis.)



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

# lip service: upkeep for your kisser



When it comes to your mouth, teeth often steal the show. Though keeping them healthy and bright is a big part of good oral care, your smile wouldn't sparkle without healthy lips. What can you do to keep yours in good shape? We're so glad you asked.

**The ailment:** Cracked, dry lips are common in the winter thanks to dry, cold air outdoors and low humidity indoors.

**The cause:** Dehydration can lead to dry mouth and splitting and cracking of the thin skin that covers the lips. Dry mouth can also be caused by prescription drugs, including antidepressants, antihistamines, decongestants and more. Non-medicinal culprits include caffeine, alcohol (even in mouthwash) and tobacco.

**The treatment:** Coat your lips with a balm to keep them moist and protected. Products with SPF ratings will also protect against sun exposure. If you think your medications are the reason your lips feel like the Sahara, consult your physician. Stay hydrated with water, limit substances such as caffeine and alcohol and sleep with a humidifier in your room.

**The ailment:** Canker sores, which many people are all too familiar with, are small ulcers that appear in the mouth, often on the inner cheeks or lips.

**The cause:** Science isn't sure what causes these annoying little sores, but allergies, stress, poor nutrition, components of toothpastes or mouth rinses, mouth trauma, viruses, bacteria and certain medications all could contribute to this problem.

**The treatment:** It's said that time will heal all wounds. That includes canker sores, which should go away on their own within 10–14 days. In the meantime, avoid anything that's spicy, acidic or hot. If you have frequent outbreaks, try to find the cause by keeping a diary of things you eat or oral and facial care products you use so you can see what happened before the outbreaks. Consult your dentist or physician for diagnosis and perhaps a prescription to keep canker sores at bay.

**The ailment:** Mouth cracks, also known as chelosis or cheilitis, are painful splits at the corners of the mouth.

**The cause:** Minor cases may just be an extension of chapped lips. Mouth cracks can also be caused by nutritional deficiencies or mouth infections, or result from several systemic illnesses. They commonly occur in people who suffer from ill-fitting dentures, diabetes, obesity or a weak immune system.

**The treatment:** If you're a denture wearer, make sure you remove them at night and keep them clean. Avoiding dry mouth is key, but make sure you're not irritating the skin by licking or rubbing the corners of your mouth. If the condition persists after a couple of weeks, visit your dentist or physician to determine the cause and an appropriate treatment.

# February is Children's Dental Health Month



Good oral health habits start in childhood. Delta Dental provides free children's dental health information to help you encourage correct dental hygiene, in a fun and playful way.

## Children's dental health articles

Read our educational articles to learn about best practices, red flags and tooth tips, particularly the article on **caring for your children's teeth**.

## Children's cavity risk assessment quiz

Take the quiz with your children to see which areas may need improving and get recommendations.



## Children's website

Find fun activities, games and information on children's dental health at our MySmileKids website. You can also view the website in **Spanish**. Be sure to check out these features:

- Our **games page**, with more than 10 games, including our printable bingo game
- Three customizable "**Make-a-Story**" features and a downloadable comic book-style story about having a loose tooth
- A **downloads page** that includes our popular Smyles calendar, MySmileKids wallpaper, stickers and coloring pages

Brush up on your own dental hygiene as well, and instill your good habits in your children.

Visit [mysmilekids.com](http://mysmilekids.com) for more!

# We're mobile

Visit us online any time,  
anywhere, on any device



Delta Dental's mobile website streamlines the functions that you use most, so you can get the information you need on the go—with just a few clicks.

Use your smartphone to get the information you need when and where you need it. Save time! There's no need to call Customer Service when the information you need is in your hands.

Delta Dental PPO<sup>SM</sup> and Delta Dental Premier<sup>®</sup> enrollees,\* log in to access our most popular features:

- Check benefits, eligibility, deductibles and maximums. Search for benefits by keyword or procedure code.
- Check claims status and claims history.
- View your ID card — pull it up at your dentist's office.
- Go paperless. Choose "Receive Statements Online" under "My Account."

Find a dentist:

- Returns dentists closest to you, using your phone's location services.
- Choose between PPO and Premier (our open network plans) and DeltaCare<sup>®</sup> USA (our closed network plan).

Don't forget to bookmark or add a home page shortcut to our mobile website so you can easily come back in just one tap.

Visit [deltadentalins.com](http://deltadentalins.com) on your mobile device.



\*Benefits, eligibility and claims information are not currently optimized for DeltaCare USA plans, but can still be accessed from your smartphone.

# 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.**

## 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.



*If you'd like to recommend your dentist for a Brushing Up interview, email [grin@deltadental.com](mailto:grin@deltadental.com) with his or her name and contact information.*

## 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 enrollees — can save you time and money.

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

Accessing the Delta Dental PPO<sup>SM</sup> network offers the lowest out-of-pocket fees and the richest benefits. Visiting a dentist in the Delta Dental Premier<sup>®</sup>

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 [deltadentalins.com](http://deltadentalins.com) to find a participating practice in your area or to see if your current dentist is in-network.