

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

summer  
2016  
volume 5, issue 2

# grin!



**Know Before You Go:**  
Your Dental Benefits on Vacation

**5 Tooth-Savvy  
Travel Tips**

**Which Type of  
Floss Is Best?**

**Smile-Friendly  
Summer Snacks**

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# cavity-free calendar

## June

Did you know that grinding or clenching your teeth can lead to headaches? June is **National Migraine and Headache Awareness Month**. Talk with your dentist about whether teeth grinding or clenching may be contributing to your headaches.



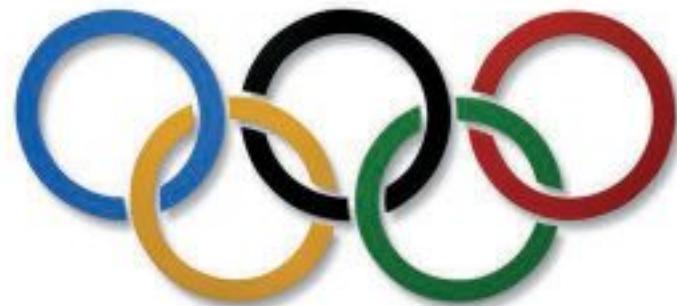
## August

Smart athletes at the Summer Olympics protect their teeth with mouthguards. **Check out page 6 for more about protecting your teeth while playing sports.**



## July

July 6 is **National Kissing Day**. Keep your breath minty-fresh by brushing your teeth after you eat!



Tata Chen / Shutterstock.com

**two-word  
answers**

**Q: How wide is the widest mouth?**

**A: 6.7 inches**





# on topic with dr. kohn

## the importance of mouthguards

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

Boxers were the first to use athletic mouthguards, and professional boxing was also the first to require mouthguards in competition in the 1920s. The risk for injury is pretty obvious for sports like boxing, but there are numerous sports and recreational activities where mouth protection can minimize the risk of tooth and mouth injury. Millions of teeth are knocked out, displaced and fractured each year due to sports and leisure injuries. Dental injuries can be easily prevented by wearing a mouthguard that fits properly. Custom mouthguards made at the dentist's office are typically more comfortable, but the widely available and budget-friendly boil-and-bite or pre-sized models work well, if worn regularly.

## mouth-friendly recipe: **watermelon feta blackberry skewers**

These refreshing watermelon bites are sure to be a hit at any summer gathering. You'll get a boost of calcium from the feta cheese, while the watermelon and blackberries contain vitamin C, which is good for gums. Bonus: Assembling them is a snap!

### **Ingredients:**

1 small watermelon, cut into 1-inch cubes  
6 ounces feta cheese, cut into 1-inch cubes  
Blackberries  
Small wooden skewers

### **Directions:**

Place one cube of watermelon, one cube of feta cheese and one blackberry on each skewer. Chill until ready to serve, or enjoy immediately!



# readers ask, we answer

Lauren asks:

**"I've noticed there are quite a few floss options available. Are any of them better than the tried-and-true spool of floss?"**

Hi, Lauren. Different floss types generally serve different purposes. For example, waxed and unwaxed nylon flosses come in various widths and flavors. Different widths can accommodate larger or smaller gaps between teeth. The wax on floss can help it slide into tight spaces, while monofilament floss tends not to shred as easily. There are also Y- or U-shape plastic holders to help people who may have difficulty holding floss, such as children or seniors. The best kind of floss to use is the one that's most comfortable for you and addresses your specific dental needs. Whichever you choose, just remember to floss every day!



*Have a question you'd like us to answer?  
Send it to [grin@deltadental.com](mailto:grin@deltadental.com), and it  
could be featured in an upcoming issue.*





# a gold medal for dental safety

This August, all eyes will be on the Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In addition to checking out the amazing performances, games and matches, we'll be watching something else: the athletes' mouths. Without proper protection for their teeth, athletes run the risk of damaging their oral health.



## Why mouthguards?

Professional and amateur athletes commonly don mouthguards during contact sports. If you tune in to Olympic volleyball, soccer, rugby, basketball and martial arts, for example, you'll likely find at least a few athletes sporting smile safety gear. It makes sense — mouthguards can help prevent broken teeth, cuts on the lips and tongue, and jaw injuries. In fact, most mouth injuries occur when athletes don't wear mouthguards. So, when players know their sports involve taking hits, they're more likely to protect their smiles.

## Which sports?

Even sports that don't require direct contact with other players can cause mouth injuries. A gymnast who misses the mark could collide face-first with a bar or the floor. Cyclists involved in crashes could easily hit their mouths on the pavement or their bikes. And weightlifters should consider what might happen if their teeth come into contact with a barbell.

Of course, playing any sport comes with a certain amount of risk. But while bruises heal and broken bones mend, teeth don't grow back — and athletes are **60 times more likely to injure their teeth when they're not wearing mouthguards.**

## Do I need a mouthguard?

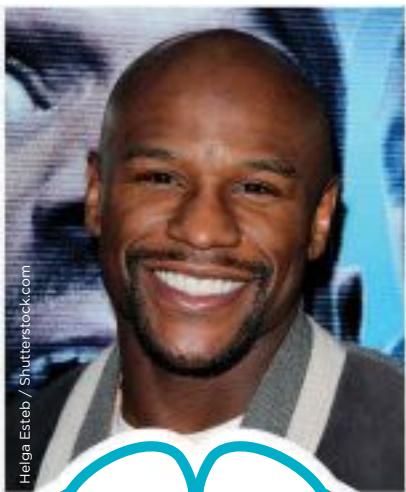
If you have an aspiring gold medalist in your home, don't worry — there's no need to spend Olympic-size bucks on a mouthguard. Stock mouthguards can be found in most sports stores; they are held in place by clenching the teeth together. "Boil-and-bite" mouthguards, also found in retail stores, fit better because after they're softened by boiling, they conform to athletes' mouths. Custom-fit mouthguards made by your dentist may be more expensive, but are usually the most comfortable.





# mad for mouthguards

You don't have to watch the Olympics to spot sports figures donning mouthguards. These professional athletes also have a lot of game when it comes to protecting their teeth.



Boxer **Floyd Mayweather** spends more than \$25,000 on each mouthguard. That includes unique designs (jewels, gold flakes and one with a \$100 bill embedded inside), cross-country trips for fittings and extensive testing.



Tennis isn't a contact sport, but **Milos Raonic** wears a mouthguard during matches anyway. It prevents him from grinding his teeth while he plays.



NBA superstar **Stephen Curry** is so well-known for chewing on his mouthguard that the habit is featured in the video game *NBA 2K16*.

# history of oral health: dental phobias

Afraid of the dentist? You're not alone. Afraid of brushing your teeth? Well, that's quite rare. Check out these four phobias related to oral health.



**Odontophobia:** fear of dentistry and receiving dental care



**Halitophobia:** fear of bad breath



**Odontarrupophobia:** fear of brushing teeth



**Philemaphobia:** fear of kissing



# 5 TOOTH-SAVVY Travel Tips

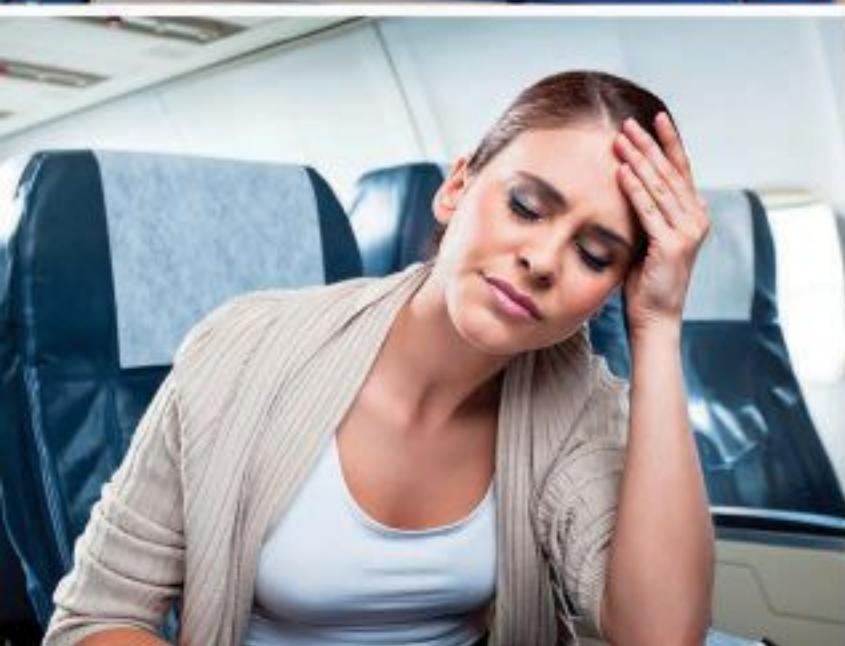
Whether you're enjoying a hammock on a beach or kicking your feet up by the pool, summer is the perfect time to shirk your responsibilities and engage in a little R&R. But no matter how relaxed you get, you should never slack off on your oral health routine.

Follow these tips to stay on top of your dental health wherever you go!



- 1.** Heading out on a long road trip? **Keep floss, a toothbrush and a tube of toothpaste in the glove compartment.** They'll be easily accessible when you want to clean your teeth at a rest stop after snacking.
- 2.** Travel cases for toothbrushes seem like a great idea. They help prevent the bristles from touching surfaces that could transfer bacteria, right? Actually, the moist environment can encourage bacterial growth. **Skip the travel case and let your toothbrush air-dry before putting it away.**





**3.** Hopping on a plane? **Keep a small tube of toothpaste in a quart-size sealable plastic bag**, along with your toothbrush and floss. Each container can have up to 3.4 ounces (100 milliliters) of liquid or gel. Carrying your dental supplies with you is better than stowing them in your check-in luggage, because it lets you brush your teeth during the flight and any layovers you might have.

**4.** **Don't leave home with a toothache.** If you're experiencing any pain, make an appointment with your dentist before you leave. The last thing you need is a dental emergency far from home.

If you have fillings or have had other restorative treatment, ask your dentist to check your mouth before you fly. Air trapped in your teeth can expand or contract at extreme altitudes, causing pain, inflammation and even loose fillings, crowns or dentures. This condition, called "tooth squeeze" or barodontalgia, can also occur while scuba diving.

**5.** Most important: **Don't stray from your oral health routine.** You may be on vacation, but plaque and harmful bacteria aren't. Stick to brushing twice and flossing once daily to keep your teeth cavity-free.

# know before you go: your dental benefits on vacation

Make sure you know what to do if you need to add a trip to the dentist to your travel plans.

Before vacationing, it's always wise to brush up on your benefits know-how — dental, medical and otherwise — so you're prepared if you need to seek treatment on the go.

If you have a dental emergency while you're traveling (domestically or abroad), Delta Dental makes it easy for you to access the services you need, when and where you need them. Most Delta Dental plans include coverage for emergency care,<sup>1</sup> but make sure to consult your plan booklet before seeking services from an out-of-network dentist.<sup>2</sup>

No matter where you are in the U.S., you can locate an in-network dentist by using our Find a Dentist tool at [deltadentalins.com](http://deltadentalins.com) or on our free mobile app. **Simply select your network and type in a city or ZIP code to see a list of nearby network dentists.**

<sup>1</sup> Under some plans, emergency treatment is covered only to relieve pain. Review your Evidence of Coverage, Summary Plan Description or Group Dental Service Contract for specific details about your plan.

<sup>2</sup> Some plans let you visit any licensed dentist for services. You can find a network dentist at [deltadentalins.com](http://deltadentalins.com). If you are not sure of your plan, register or log in to Online Services.



# Smile-Friendly SUMMER SNACKS

From professional baseball games to days at the Little League® field and even trips to the state fair, concession stand cuisine is pretty commonplace over the summer. Although most concessions aren't the best for your smile, there are plenty of choices that are healthier than cotton candy and funnel cakes.

**Peanuts** are a tasty snack — and a great source of protein, manganese and vitamin E. Just make sure you don't use your teeth to crack open their shells!

**Hamburgers** are fine for your teeth. Consider adding **cheese, lettuce and tomato** for some calcium and vitamins C and K.

Hot summer days call for cool, refreshing drinks. Quench your thirst with **water or unsweetened iced tea** instead of sodas and sports drinks. Not only are they better for your teeth, they also keep you hydrated during warm weather. Just be aware that iced tea has the same teeth-staining properties as hot tea.

Here's welcome news for chocoholics: When nothing but a sweet treat will do, chocolate is the best way to satisfy that craving. It doesn't cling to teeth like chewy and sticky candies do. When sugar sticks to enamel for a long time, it can cause bacteria growth and eventually cavities. That means you should opt for a **chocolate candy bar** instead of gummy candies or sweets with caramel or toffee. Dark chocolate is a better choice than milk, because it usually contains less sugar.

Plan ahead and bring your own snacks from home. **String cheese, fresh fruit and nuts**, as well as **refillable water bottles**, are easily portable and are allowed in some ballparks and fairgrounds. Just be sure to check the facility's food and drink policy before you go — or be prepared to take your snacks back to the car.



## keeping you covered: is your oral health at risk?

Do you have a couple of minutes? Great! You have all the time you need to receive a free oral health report for yourself or your children to share with your dentist.

Try out Delta Dental's free online risk assessment tool. Your answers to a series of questions will help determine your risk for tooth decay, gum disease and oral cancer. You will receive an easy-to-understand assessment that can be printed and shared with your dentist at your next visit. Your dentist can discuss your results with you and come up with a plan customized to your needs.



Ready to get your score? Visit [deltadentalins.com/challenge](http://deltadentalins.com/challenge)

# brushing up



Ever wonder what your dentist is really thinking? *Grin!* wanted to find out too, so we talked to Delta Dental network dentist Dr. Linda Vidone.

**When did you decide you wanted to be a dentist?** My mother took me to a dentist when I was 7 because I said I wanted to be a dentist. My dentist found cavities at that first appointment, and I was excited because that meant I got to come back for more dental visits. I guess I've always had a fascination with teeth, and I can honestly say I'm now more fascinated than ever.

**What dental advancements are you especially grateful for?** I'm grateful that dentistry is moving in the direction of treating diseases rather than just filling teeth.

**What's your favorite dental joke?** Did you hear about the dentist who married a manicurist? They fight tooth and nail!

**If you could tell patients to stop doing one thing, what would it be?** I would like people to stop saying something difficult is like "pulling teeth" — for me, pulling teeth is really fast and easy!

**Any funny stories from the dental chair?** One day a patient fell asleep while I was performing scaling and root planing in our front operatory. He was even snoring away! We didn't realize we were that relaxing.



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



## dental benefits on the go

Logging in to Delta Dental's free mobile app provides quick and easy access to coverage information, recent claims and even your ID card. Looking for an in-network dentist? Our app can help. You can search for a dentist by network, dental specialty, location or a provider's last name. And by clicking on a dentist's name, you can view additional information, add the dentist to your contacts and get directions to the dental office.

To download the app, search for "Delta Dental" on Google Play or the App Store.

