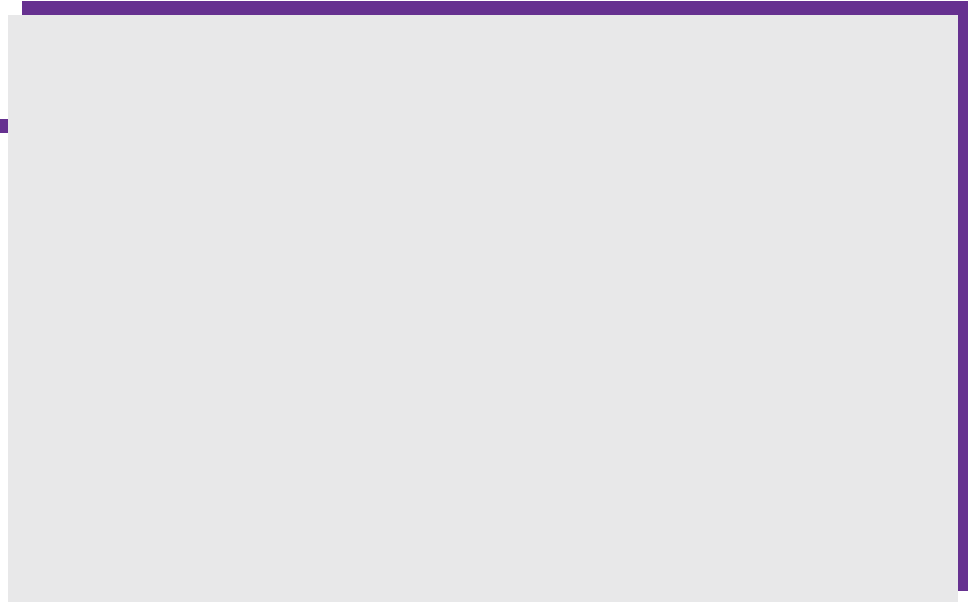


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# Clear Out the Clutter

## A New Approach to Spring Cleaning

# INSEPARABLE

## The Story of Two Dogs, Two Soul Mates

**W**hen animal shelter authorities found Isaac — a blind husky — meandering through the streets of Fontana, California, they immediately noticed something curious. It wasn't that the pup was blind. It was that he had a faithful companion — Isabella, a Chihuahua-terrier mix. She was serving as Isaac's guide dog, or rather, his unofficial Seeing Eye dog.

How the two met and how they developed their unique and remarkable relationship is a complete mystery, but one thing was clear: These two could never be separated. They were soul mates. When they walked together, Isabella took the lead. Whenever Isaac fell behind, Isabella would patiently wait for her companion to catch up. Or if Isaac couldn't find his way, Isabella would go to Isaac and let him know he was not alone.

Not long after Isaac and Isabella were found, they were brought to a local shelter. Unfortunately, due to overcrowding and extremely limited resources, the two pups were put on the schedule to be euthanized. Knowing they only had days to live, the shelter put the story of the dynamic doggy duo on their Facebook page.

The shelter hoped a caring family would see the dogs before time ran out. But no one with the right home conditions came forward. The shelter was at a loss until someone from the STAND Foundation reached out. The STAND Foundation is a nonprofit dedicated to animal rescue, and they were more than willing to take the pair.

With Isaac and Isabella in the care of the STAND Foundation, the organization put their resources to work to find the pups a new owner. Eventually, a new home was found, and the two best friends went on to live a life full of love and continued companionship.



**W**hile January is a time when lots of people are pressured into making resolutions, I think the dawn of spring is a perfect time to see what you have achieved in 2017 thus far — and what you would like to achieve for the rest of the year. Spring cleaning doesn't just mean dusting off the office shelves or cleaning out the closet. It can also be a great time to take stock of where you are at in your personal and professional relationships. Make spring the time to re-evaluate your goals.

We all have elements of life that are cluttered and causing us stress. Maybe your desk is packed with unnecessary trinkets and out-of-date documents. You might have a toxic friendship in your life that is causing you unwanted anxiety. Regardless of what it is, whether small or large, there is something you can eliminate to make your daily life less of a chore. You don't need to make a huge commitment — even using a free hour here or there to do a little decluttering can make a huge difference over time. Sometimes clearing out the small pebbles from our gardens makes it easier to deal with the boulders later on. Plus, it's a lot easier when you can see 'em.

One thing you might want to begin thinking about clearing out from your calendar is your continuing education hours for the year. Find out how many hours your state requires and do your best to select meaningful classes that you will actually get something out of, rather than simply going through the motions. We have a pediatric-specific conference that we will be hosting this October 6 and 7 in Atlanta. There are very few continuing education opportunities that

focus on pediatric dentistry, and we also take the time to discuss personal growth issues that add value to the lives of those who attend.

Beyond giving you a chance to learn a little that will help you in and out of the office, the conference will be an opportunity to chat and share stories with some people who go through similar trials, tribulations, and victories. Often it can be tough to get people to understand the particular perspective of a dental assistant, but that won't be a problem at this conference. You will be surprised how common some issues are that you might think are specific to your office. There are always a ton of laughs at the conference, to go along with the education.

When you are clearing out the clutter in your life this spring, don't forget to take a little time to celebrate the small successes, as well. Being a dental assistant can be a stressful job, but it is an important one. Give yourself a pat on the back for everything you've accomplished in 2017, then look forward to achieving even more.

*Rhea*

Rhea M. Haugseth, D.M.D



# CAFFEINE AND SLEEP

## Is Caffeine Stealing Your Sleep?

**S**leep is essential, and one-third of us aren't getting enough. According to the National Sleep Foundation, adults need between seven and nine hours of sleep per night. While sleep may be influenced by sleep disorders and side effects from medications, that afternoon cup of coffee or tea may be to blame for your sleeping struggles.

### WHY IS SLEEP IMPORTANT?

Every night, the body repairs and rejuvenates itself during sleep. Getting enough sleep positively affects your mental and physical health, while not getting enough can be detrimental. Lack of sleep is linked to obesity, mental illness, high blood pressure, and stress. Sleep is also fundamental for retaining information, because the brain forms new pathways during sleep.

### HOW CAFFEINE HINDERS SLEEP

Caffeine hinders sleep by blocking adenosine receptors in the brain. Adenosine is responsible for telling your brain that your body needs rest. Caffeine fits perfectly in your adenosine receptors, taking adenosine's place and leaving it with nowhere to go. This means if caffeine is consumed too close to bedtime, your body's circadian

rhythm may be thrown off. Researchers from the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in the U.K. found that when study participants were given 200 mg of caffeine 3 hours before bed, the caffeine delayed their circadian sleep pattern by 40 minutes. And participants who were given caffeine and then exposed to bright lights had their sleep cycle delayed by 105 minutes!

### KEEP CAFFEINE FROM STEALING YOUR SLEEP

Fortunately, there are ways you can drink the caffeinated beverages you love and still get the shut-eye you need. First, avoid caffeine during the afternoon. If you normally go to bed around 10 p.m., it's recommended that you avoid caffeine after noon. Because caffeine has a half-life of 5.7 hours, if you drink 200 mg of caffeine at noon, you'll still have 50 mg of caffeine in your system at bedtime. Second, know your body. Most people have a limit of 300–400 mg of caffeine per day, which is the equivalent of one large cup of coffee at Starbucks or three to four 8-ounce cups of coffee. Third, don't drink coffee when you first wake up. While many run for their coffee immediately after waking up, caffeine works best when consumed 1–2 hours after waking.

# The Life-Changing Magic of Spring Cleaning

Houses get stuffy after a long winter, and spring cleaning is the best way to freshen up your living space. While comprehensive cleaning can seem like a major chore, it can also liven up your home and give you a sense of pride and accomplishment. As Marie Kondo, the best-selling author of "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up" puts it, "The objective of cleaning is not just to clean, but to feel happiness living within the environment."

You should begin cleaning by getting rid of unwanted objects. "To truly cherish the things that are important to you," Kondo writes, "you must first discard those that have outlived their purpose." Consider donating those objects that you no longer need to a charity. You free up space while providing another family with something they need.

After donating excess goods, it's time to get down to cleaning. Though lots of people organize their cleaning by room, another smart tactic is to divide tasks into categories. Schedule one day for windows, another day for carpets, and so on. You can assign tasks to family members based on preference much easier this way.

There are lots of tools in your house that can do double duty during spring cleaning. Your dishwasher works great for cleaning glass fixtures and plastic objects like your toothbrush holder. You can use your vacuum for couches and drapes. Spring cleaning is also an opportunity to clean those overlooked areas like your oven and microwave.

A thorough cleaning in the spring makes your home easier to maintain for the rest of the year. It also provides an opportunity to make changes to decorations and put a new spin on your environment. Plus, nothing beats the feeling of putting your feet up in a freshly cleaned home on a beautiful spring day.



# WHEN CHILDREN RUN WILD

## DEALING WITH HOOLIGANS AND THEIR PARENTS

Whatever industry you are in, when you deal with kids, you have to handle behavioral problems. As a dental assistant, you have to be delicate dealing with rambunctious children because you are neither the children's parent nor someone with assumed authority, like a teacher. While it can be an uncomfortable situation asking a parent to discipline a child, it is for the benefit of other patients, the practice, and the children themselves.

Once a child is in the chair, it is usually a lot easier to deal with them. The parents aren't around, and you are the boss when you are in your dental room. When a parent and child are in the reception area however, is when the situation is most problematic. Parents can be distracted. Scrolling through their phones, they're totally unaware that their child is running around the office. Not only is this a quality-of-life issue for other patients, but it is also a safety issue for the child and an insurance issue for your practice. The last thing you want to do is end up with damaged equipment or an injured child.

So what do you do in this situation? Well, the first step is to speak to the parent. Be courteous and apologetic, but firm. Often the parent won't even realize what is going on around them. Say something like, "Ma'am I'm really sorry, but little Johnny is behaving a little wildly right now, and we need you to ask him to stop." If you encounter resistance, remind the parent that you do not want the child to be hurt, hurt another patient, or break something in the office. If things still won't improve, you may need to ask the parent to take the child outside. Luckily, though, episodes rarely make it to this stage.

Nobody wants to tell a parent how to raise their child. When it comes to your office, however, it's your job to maintain an orderly and safe environment. While dealing with misbehaving children may not be anyone's idea of a good time, it is an essential part of creating a welcoming office.

## ENJOY A LAUGH ON US!



## QUICK AND EASY SHEPHERD'S PIE

March is the month of Irish pride, thanks to St. Patrick's Day. Celebrate the luck of the Irish with this savory shepherd's pie recipe!

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 2 cups hot mashed potatoes
- 4 ounces cream cheese
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, divided
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cups frozen mixed vegetables, thawed
- 1 cup beef gravy

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat oven to 375 F.
2. In a large skillet, brown the beef, then drain.
3. In another bowl, mix together potatoes, cream cheese, ½ cup cheddar cheese, and garlic.
4. Add vegetables and gravy into the meat, then pour into a 9-inch square baking dish. Cover with the potato mixture, then sprinkle with remaining cheese.
5. Bake for 20 minutes.

*Enjoy!*

Recipe inspired by KraftRecipes.com.