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## How the Body Celebrates THE CHANGE OF SEASON

**B**elieve it or not, the human body undergoes some odd changes as the seasons transition from summer to autumn. Sure, we see and feel changes in our environments (leaves turn to shades of red and yellow, temperatures drop, we trade T-shirts for jackets, etc.), but the body and brain react internally just as our environments do externally.

**Everybody Talks:** The nights will get longer, and surprisingly, so will your phone calls. A study of 1.3 million cell phone users in Portugal by researchers at the University of Newcastle found people spent more time talking on the phone in colder, wetter environments. If you find your contact list shrinks in the fall to close friends and family, don't worry, that's totally normal.

**The Season of Love:** Autumn, not summer or spring, is the optimal time of year people fall in love. While the temperatures chill out, our bodies counteract the potential for cabin fever by releasing extra boosts of dopamine, the brain's natural "happy hormone." The release of this chemical is what gives us romantic thoughts, butterflies in our tummies, and even the desire to snuggle up close.

**Hydration is Key:** Despite the sweltering summer heat, in fall, we're more likely to get dehydrated. You may not want to grab a water bottle over a soothing mug of hot chocolate, coffee, or tea on a 40-below day, but you should keep H2O in mind. If you're not properly hydrated this season, you'll be prone to ailments like dry,

cracked lips, which is not good for the previous fun fact.

**Jog Your Memory:** Research published in the "Journal of Experimental Psychology" found that the mind is sharper and on higher alert in the colder seasons. Turns out, your memory recall skills are stronger on cloudy days than on sunny ones.

Just because you have to retreat indoors for a few months doesn't mean great things won't happen. So don't fret; your brain chemistry is just as excited about pulling out your autumn jacket as you are!

**W**e're part of a very special field of dentistry. Any assistant who has been chairside with a difficult pediatric patient (and often an even more difficult parent) will understand that there are multiple layers of communication and understanding that must take place in order to ensure everyone in the room is as comfortable as possible. Since caring for patients in our particular field of dentistry is so nuanced and complex, we need advanced training and a strong community of support. By becoming a member of the Pediatric Dental Assistants Association, your practice has shown respect and care for the people who walk through its doors by providing you the tools you need as an assistant to transform the experience for every patient who visits.

I hope you are as excited about becoming a member of the association as I am for you. My dream for you as a member of the Pediatric Dental Assistants Association is that you'll take away much more than professionalism and sharper skills. I've seen it all in my 35 years in the field of pediatric dentistry, and believe me, I understand the value of self-growth as part of professional growth. I can't tell you how many times I've met dental assistants who perform wonderfully in the interview and have proven their clinical credentials to a very high standard, only to let me down when it comes to speaking to children and their parents, or who let a personal challenge undermine their professional career.

Being a pediatric dental assistant is more than looking great on paper. Since you'll often spend more time speaking with the patient than the doctor does, to really succeed in this field a pediatric dental assistant must also be friendly, warm, and welcoming. It's the difference between simply sucking spit and being a personality for kids to connect with. You should know the cartoon characters on their T-shirts, and you should be able to make a kid laugh. After all, the experiences that children have at the dentist when they are young will shape how they feel about visiting the dentist in the future — and could have a vital, lasting impact on their adult life. This is something they didn't teach you in school. And that's where the association comes in. The personal growth gained through this association will reflect positively on your professional growth and expertise.

My true hope is that you will continue to grow as an individual and as a person toward becoming the absolute best version of yourself you can be, and that those skills and the positive attributes you strengthen will, over time, naturally translate to your professional environment. The association will be a place for you to voice your concerns and a community you can rely on for support and encouragement. Above anything else, I want you to understand that you are a critical part of your team and that you are valued. The trick is to make sure your work performance is reflective of that worth,

**The experiences that children have at the dentist when they are young will shape how they feel about visiting the dentist in the future.**

and that your personal challenges are faced with the best tools and resources.

I started the Pediatric Dental Assistant School in Atlanta, because I was frustrated by the lack of experienced dental assistants. I knew I could do better. I'm now very excited to have the Pediatric Assistants Association (PDAA) where you can get training and support 24/7 through online modules to increase your value as an employee and to improve your sense of having a professional career, not just a job. I also hope to see doctors take pride in your work by giving you this opportunity, and to see you rise to the occasion to prove your worth through training and development. I am so excited to see the interest in the association, and look forward to working with you in this new community!

*Rhea*

Rhea M. Haugseth, D.M.D

# DE-STRESS FOR BETTER HEALTH

In recent years, studies have shown more and more that happy, fit employees make for the most productive workers. This piece of insight has led companies to adopt a more open-minded fitness and health mindset that has helped to create in-office gyms, lunchtime yoga, and even employee reward systems for tracking fitness accomplishments. But with companies devoting more of their attention to keeping their employees healthy and fit, are they really making a difference? Researchers say, "No."

While adding healthy activities to the workday may be a great way to



emphasize the importance of staying fit, experts are finding that those activities alone aren't making as big an impact as anticipated. Evidence indicates that the stress and anxiety of the "24/7 access" world we now live in is one of the main contributing factors to an employees' unhappiness. With technology and multiple avenues of constant contact, many employees feel as though an immediate response is

necessary. This stress becomes chronic due to the fact that they're expected to be available anytime, night or day.

So the question now becomes, "What can we do to avoid this stress?" While your employer may still be a little behind the curve when it comes to relieving workday woes, there are some simple strategies that you can take to help eliminate stress and live a longer, happier, and healthier life.

It's important to take time to clear your mind each and every day. When you completely immerse yourself in your work, you tend to lose sight of the other things in life that you value. Take 10 to 15 minutes each day to turn off your cell phone, get away from the computer screen and simply clear your mind. Taking a few minutes to meditate each day can help to relieve mental and physical tension. It can also help us to increase production at work.

# JOIN US AT THE FIRST ANNUAL PDAA CONFERENCE IN Atlanta!

There is always room for professional and personal growth. As we become more experienced, it is important that we continue to build upon our knowledge, polish our skills, and perform at our best. Your membership in the Pediatric Dental Association is a great first step toward this goal, and by attending the annual conferences, you'll have even more opportunities for education and growth.

Register now for the first annual Pediatric Dental Assistants Association Conference, which is taking place on October 23-24 at the Atlanta Airport Marriott.

The lineup of events includes an amazing mix of speakers. Hear from Matt Paladini of Paladini Financial Management on how to control expenses and save money at home and in the office. There will also be an effective team communication presentation by Janet Soda of Julie Weir Associates on how to overcome objections and parent/team communication skill building, and Scott Childress from Smile Savvy will give you the dos and don'ts of social media. Finally, Dentistry's Image Expert Janice Hurley will present tips on how to look your best.

To register go to [www.pediatricdentalassistantsassociation.org](http://www.pediatricdentalassistantsassociation.org)



October 23-24, 2015  
**ATLANTA  
GEORGIA**

## CHAIRSIDE CHATTER SITUATION OF THE MONTH

Dear Pediatric Pro,

I was working with a 4-year-old new patient, Johnny. He had never been to the dentist. He seemed a little shy, but was comfortable as I asked him questions. Mom kept answering for him and was discussing her fears and her concerns that he will not behave well in front of the doctor. Johnny was "all ears" as she was delivering this information, and he was becoming more anxious.

Once I got him into the dental chair and got him to focus on me and what we were doing, he settled down, but still kept a close eye on Mom. Tell, show, do worked very well for Johnny.

Suddenly, I felt I was on the edge of the Grand Canyon. Every time I asked him to do something, I heard an echo of the "exact same words" from his mother. Johnny was becoming confused and was beginning to lose it again.

What can I say or do to get parents not to interrupt as I work with Johnny one-on-one to gain his cooperation?

*Susan L., TX*

Susan, I feel your pain. While it would be helpful to ask the mom to leave the room, I have found that to be impossible with some parents. They would not dream of leaving Johnny to fend for himself!

My suggestion would be to excuse yourself, get another staff member to sit with Johnny and ask to speak with the mom out of the area or room. Explain the process you are using — tell, show, do — and how it helps to build a rapport, and that you would appreciate her help by remaining a silent observer. Her confidence in what you are doing will transfer to him, and he will do much better. Remember, the focus is on Johnny being a great dental patient, and hopefully, a cavity-free little boy!

You may be able to preempt this type of parental behavior with information you send to the patient's home prior to their visit, or your new patient coordinator can explain what is going to happen at the visit and get the parent on board beforehand.

*-Pediatric Pro*

## ENJOY A LAUGH ON US!

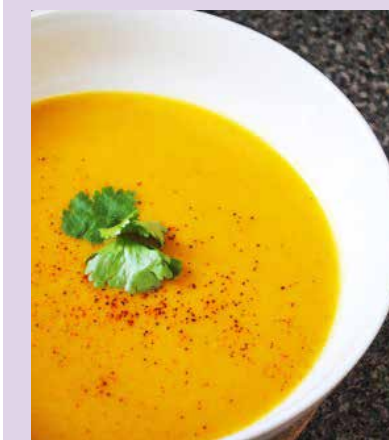


My dentist told me I needed a crown. I was like, "I KNOW, RIGHT?!"

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## HARVEST SQUASH SOUP



### INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb-1½ lbs. butternut squash, peeled and chopped
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1 handful of cranberries (fresh or frozen)
- 1 white or yellow onion, chopped
- 1 red onion (small), chopped
- ¾ cup applesauce
- 4 cups veggie broth
- Salt
- Pepper
- 1½ teaspoons marjoram

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Melt butter in soup pot and add squash, onions, and cranberries. Cook on medium heat, stirring occasionally, until onions are golden, 8-10 minutes.
2. Heat broth and applesauce (microwave for a few minutes so it's not cold, but it doesn't really get hot), and add to veggies. Bring to a boil.
3. Add salt, pepper, and marjoram, and simmer 35 minutes, until squash is tender.
4. Let cool, then puree in a blender in batches.
5. Heat (don't boil) and serve.