

## Inside This Issue

- p.1 Conference Season Is Here
- p.2 Sleep Better and Feel Great
- p.2 How to Encourage Pre-Appointment Paperwork
- p.3 3 Tips to Help Organize Your Crazy Life
- p.3 Have a Laugh on Us!
- p.3 Beans and Greens Rigatoni
- p.4 Have You Heard About Mauritius?

# MARVELOUS MAURITIUS A Secret Island of Adventure

**J**ust over 1,000 miles off the southeastern coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean lies the small island of Mauritius. The island is often overlooked by the rest of the world. Most people are more likely to have heard of the island's most famous extinct occupant, the dodo bird, than the island itself. This is shocking when you discover how much fun there is to be had in this tropical wonderland.

### ADVENTURE AWAITS

Looking for fun in the sun? Start your trip to Mauritius with a hike up the lush Lion Mountain, or take time to snap a photo of the Seven Coloured Earths, where volcanic soil has created sand dunes of seven distinct colors. And what's a trip to an island without the beach? Beautiful coral reefs surround Mauritius, keeping sharks away from the pristine beaches. Island guests and locals can fearlessly scuba dive around the brilliant reefs, swim with dolphins, kite surf, and find lots of other ways to enjoy the warm ocean waters.

### WALK THROUGH HISTORY

More than a tropical escape, Mauritius is an island full of history and culture, so there are plenty of opportunities to learn about the island's layered past. You can visit one of the historical rummeries or explore Mauritius' two UNESCO World Heritage Sites. You can also check out Aapravasi Ghat, the Immigration Depot, and Le Mourne Brabant.

### TASTE THE MEMORIES

A day spent playing on an island is always better with great food. Influenced by its French, Creole, Indian, and Chinese heritage, Mauritius offers a vast menu of delicious dishes to try, from curry to dim sum. And the rich soil and bountiful ocean provide more than enough fresh fruit and seafood to go around.

Despite its amazing vacation potential, Mauritius is all but unheard of to people in the United States. This means travelers can find amazing five-star resorts at unbeatable prices! With this in mind, isn't it time you got to know the island of Mauritius?



## IT'S ALMOST CONFERENCE TIME

Counting Down the Days Until October 26



**I**t's hard to believe that the fourth annual PDAA Conference is almost here. It feels like not that long ago that I was just finishing up last year's conference and doing the preliminary planning for this one, but the calendar doesn't lie. Oct. 26 and 27 are fast approaching, which means it's time to book your trip if you haven't already.

In previous editions of the newsletter, I've detailed our amazing lineup of guest speakers. This time around, I wanted to focus on something just as important as all the things you'll learn during the conference: how much fun you'll have.

Of course, the conference is a way for you to get your continuing education credits for the year while learning about topics that are specifically relevant to pediatric dentistry. But it's also a chance to spend time with people who do a very similar job to your own. I'm always excited to hear about the new friends people make over the course of two days. At the conference, you'll find people who intimately understand your frustrations and joys. In my experience, one of the most commonly spoken phrases at the conference is "me too."

Bringing together pediatric dental assistants from all over the nation is what the PDAA Conference is all about. I want you to leave with tips and insights that allow you to do your job better, but it wouldn't be worth it if that involved boring you to death. Instead, we like our education to be liberally sprinkled with laughs and games. Friday night is the best example of this goal, and you won't want to miss it. That's when we will hold our "Price Is Right" game and give away tons of cool prizes.

As great as all the events are — and believe me, they are great — some of the most magical moments at the conference won't show up on your schedule. You never

know who you will meet and forge a lifelong relationship with. I'm also willing to bet you'll hear horror stories that sound like something out of your worst nightmare. Get a bunch of pediatric dental assistants in a room and the stories of kids crying, having accidents, and being hooligans are sure to follow. The PDAA Conference has information that everybody at a practice can benefit from. Well, except doctors. We have a strict no-doctors-allowed policy, so let me know if you see any dentists trying to sneak into our conference.

As I've mentioned before, we'll honor both an assistant and an office with awards for their performance. The PDAA Assistant of the Year will go to a member who's gone above and beyond for a patient, family, or community. You can nominate yourself or your peers by telling us their story of dedication. The winning assistant

will receive a three-day cruise for two. The second award is the 2018 Pediatric Dental Practice of the Year. This recognition will go to a practice that has discovered creative ways to make their office a welcoming environment for children. We want to see DIY ideas that are unique and have a ton of personality. If your practice or one in your area fits the bill, we want to hear about it. Award rules and nominations can be found on the PDAA Conference page. Please remember to submit your nominations by Sept. 21.

**"Bringing together pediatric dental assistants from all over the nation is what the PDAA Conference is all about."**

I can't wait to see you at this year's PDAA Conference. For those of you who've purchased tickets already, it's time to start counting down the days. For those of you who haven't, I just have one question: What are you waiting for?

*Rhea*

Rhea M. Haugseth, D.M.D.





# HOW TO ACHIEVE A MORE RESTFUL NIGHT'S SLEEP

A good night's sleep is one of the most important things you can do for your mind and body. One study published in the Journal of Psychosomatic Research found that the quality of your sleep is much more important than the quantity — that is, if you want to feel rested. And we all want to feel rested. So, what can you do to improve the quality of your sleep and get the rest you need?

**Listen to your body.** This, above all else, is crucial to a good night's sleep. Your body knows when it's time for bed. Generally, you want to go to bed when you feel tired, whether that's at 8 p.m. or 1 a.m. Whenever your body tells you it needs rest, you should make a habit of going to bed then. The more consistent you are, the better your sleep will be.

**Wake up naturally.** Jolting yourself awake with an alarm or radio isn't doing your brain and body any favors (it can be stressful on the body and even elevate blood pressure, which is not good first thing in the morning). If you do need an alarm, consider a wake-up light. Wake-up lights mimic the sunrise, slowly brightening the room, waking your body in a natural, gentle way.

**Kick the screen habit.** You've heard it before, and you'll hear it again: Looking at an electronic screen — a TV, computer, tablet, or smartphone — before bed is detrimental to sleep quality. Light from these devices is disruptive to your brain's suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN), which helps regulate your circadian rhythm, and screen time before bed can throw off normal SCN function.

Put your excuses for staying up too late to bed. Say no to "one more episode." And all those emails? They can wait until tomorrow. Not getting enough quality sleep is harmful to your mental and physical health. When you get into the habit of following these three tips, you'll find yourself feeling rested and refreshed in no time.

# NEED A PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO MANAGE YOUR KIDS' CRAZY SCHEDULES? Try These 3 Tips Instead

School has started. Youth sports are in full swing. Work is crazy. Food has become more about necessity than enjoyment. All of this can only mean one thing: Fall has begun. The crazy schedules this time of year can make it tough for parents to keep their heads on straight; making it through the insanity sometimes feels more like survival than life. But there are tactics you can employ to turn the tide and find more time for yourself.

## TAG TEAM

There's no reason to try to do everything on your own. The phrase "It takes a village to raise a child" exists because managing the stressors of life requires help. A great place to start is by establishing car pools with a parent group you trust. You can alternate drivers weekly, which provides the opportunity for you to focus your attention on other priorities — or if you're lucky, have some freedom.

## THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB

Technology makes organization easier and more accessible than ever. By using a tool like a shared



calendar, you can coordinate the entire family's schedule so you never miss a beat. And apps like Mealime and MealBoard give you the ability to whip up food that is cost-effective and delicious.

## TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

While you're busy trying to rally the troops at soccer practice, the scene at home resembles a horror movie. Laundry is piling up, food is spoiling in the fridge, and the dust bunnies around the house now have names. Housecleaning is a part-time job in its own right. The only way to stay on top of duties around

the house is to work together. A chore chart with clear responsibilities is a great place to start. Whether you have one child or eight, everyone is capable of pitching in.

You can have all the organizational abilities in the world, but the best way to manage life's madness isn't by directing day-to-day tasks; it's by managing stress. Instead of using these tools to control life, look at them as a way to free up time so you can decompress and enjoy the things you love.

## SITUATION OF THE MONTH A PAPERWORK PILE-UP

### DEAR RHEA,

I had a mother come into the office with her four children. All of them had new-patient appointments, but the mother had not filled out paperwork in advance. Even though she knew she would have to fill out a ton of information, she didn't arrive early to the appointments. It threw our entire schedule for the day out of whack. Making matters worse, we even have a page on our website where patients can do their paperwork at home. My question for you is how do we get them to do it?

-Diane

### DEAR DIANE,

Paperwork log jams are an extremely common problem, especially for pediatric practices. Parents like to have all of their children visit on the same day, which usually means filling out multiple sets of paperwork. If you want to avoid this fate, you need to encourage patients to complete paperwork in advance at every chance you get.

Having a document page on your website is a great start, but it's often not enough to get patients to take action. When a new patient books an appointment, you should make sure to tell them how much time it will save them to do paperwork in advance. We all know that parents with multiple children can get overwhelmed when trying to complete paperwork in the office with kids wanting their attention at the same time. Also, trying to make sure they get the right information on the right child's form can

be a challenge amidst the chaos. Having the parent complete the forms at home, after the kids are in bed, where they can concentrate more easily, will make the completion much easier. They can then fax, email, or even mail the completed forms back to the office ahead of time. If they happen to be in the office, you can offer to print off copies for them to fill out. Your appointment reminder cards should also contain instructions about how to fill out paperwork for their next recall appointment.

An even better strategy is to build out text message reminders for paperwork. You probably already have a system in place for appointments themselves, and it's not hard to add a paperwork component for new patients. You should send this reminder when the appointment is booked, one week before, and 48 hours before they are scheduled to arrive in the office. Here's a sample of what that might look like:

Welcome to [practice name]!

If you want to make your first appointment even easier, please go to [website link] to fill out your paperwork in advance. Thanks so much. We look forward to seeing you.

Try these ideas out at your practice, and you'll find a lot more patients filling out their paperwork in advance.

-Rhea

## HAVE A LAUGH



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## BEANS AND GREENS RIGATONI

### INGREDIENTS

- 12 ounces rigatoni pasta
- 1 bunch Tuscan kale, rinsed
- 1 15-ounce can cannellini (white kidney) beans
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Salt, for pasta water and to taste
- 2 ounces fresh grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (optional)

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large stock pot, boil 6 quarts of liberally salted water. On another burner, heat a large skillet to medium-low.
2. Add pasta to boiling water and cook for 3 minutes less than the package recommends.
3. While pasta is cooking, add beans, red pepper, and 1 tablespoon of oil to skillet. Cook until lightly browned, about 5 minutes.
4. Add cooked pasta, kale, and 1 cup pasta water to skillet. Toss vigorously as kale cooks, about 4 minutes.
5. Transfer to bowls, top with a squeeze of lemon, sprinkle with cheese or salt, and serve.

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