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CHOCOLATE AND YOUR TEETH

A COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIP

There are many holidays that incorporate chocolate somewhere in their celebration. Valentine's Day is filled with heart-shaped boxes full of the confection, and no Easter basket would be complete without chocolate eggs. But there's another holiday in July that is based on the treat itself. World Chocolate Day takes place on July 7, and many people will use this opportunity to eat as much chocolate as they possibly can. While chocolate is certainly delicious, it can have negative effects on your smile.

When most people indulge in a chocolatey treat, they go for milk chocolate. Milk chocolate is made from a combination of cocoa, sugar, and powdered milk. In most cases, cocoa makes up 20%–30% of the chocolate while sugar and powdered milk make up the rest. Sugar is incredibly hazardous for your dental health, and milk chocolate contains about 15 grams of sugar per ounce. The high sugar content in milk chocolate can quickly lead to cavities and tooth decay.

White chocolate is very similar to milk chocolate in terms of the damage it inflicts on teeth. On average, there are 17 grams of sugar per ounce of white chocolate, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Consuming white chocolate can also lead to cavities and tooth decay.



So, what about dark chocolate? It can't all be bad for you, right? If you're going to eat chocolate, dark chocolate is the best choice. Dark chocolate contains polyphenols, which are chemicals that help fight harmful bacteria in our mouths. Interestingly enough, consuming dark chocolate can help improve bad breath and even prevent some sugars from turning into acid. Certain studies even suggest that dark chocolate can act as a cavity deterrent. Additionally, dark chocolate contains antioxidants that can help improve your overall health as well as help prevent gum disease.

If you're planning to enjoy your favorite cocoa treat on World Chocolate Day, or any other day of the year, give dark chocolate a try. It's not as hazardous for your teeth and could even provide you with additional health benefits.

SUMMER STATE OF MIND

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE 8TH ANNUAL PDTA CONFERENCE

As I write this, I'm filled with gratitude after returning from the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) conference in San Diego, California. Not only was it a great meeting, but the turnout was fantastic, too. Thank you to all of our members who stopped by our booth to say hi — it's always fun to see you and catch up in person. I must say that the weather in San Diego was much cooler than I anticipated — especially for this time of year. And, to all of our new members who have recently joined us, we are excited to have you aboard and welcome you to our community.



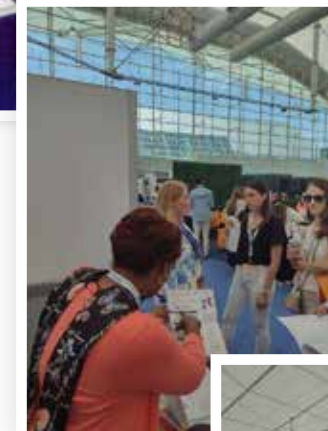
The two-day conference will focus primarily on best communication skills and practices with a full day on sedation (nonclinical). On the first day, Shelly Short will be presenting and speaking on each team member's importance and role in the success of each sedation appointment. From the first person who gathers the medical history all the way through to the last person who discharges the patient, each part is critical. The entire team will benefit from these presentations.

For the second half of the first day, Dr. Haugseth and Michelle de Valk will present on communication and front desk/telephone etiquette in your office to prevent telephone blunders from ever occurring, which can sometimes lead to major fires within the office. Oftentimes, a phone call is the first point of contact with clients; thus, it's important to get it right.

As we are in the middle of summer, we know your offices are buzzing with kids who are on summer vacation and you are busy. During these months, there's no better time to keep your clients and their families engaged and to create some fun activities for them, outside of visiting the dentist, of course.

In the June Practice Pearl and this issue's Situation of the Month inside the newsletter, I provided many ideas for some contests, ideas, and activities you can promote within your office to get yourself some free publicity and engagement within your practice's patients and their families. As a quick reminder: All Practice Pearl's and newsletters can be found archived on the members page of our website.

Although we are still in summer vacation mode, our 8th Annual PDTA Conference on Oct. 7–8 is quickly approaching. Be sure to sign up early (before Sept. 3) to lock in the early bird pricing: \$50 off of each registration.



The second day of the conference will cover sedation procedures with each topic being taught by MDs, providing a medical perspective. Each individual presentation will be about an hour long and will outline the sedation preparation process for parents and patients, the pre-sedation assessment, adverse events related to sedation, and procedural sedation monitoring.

I hope you all have a fabulous and successful summer and look forward to seeing each of you in October.



OVERCOMING INATTENTION

STRATEGIES TO FIGHT DISTRACTION

"Like our content? Use the provided articles in your company blog or Facebook posts!"

With our phones always on standby, we're more easily distracted than ever. Then there are also interruptions by coworkers or family members, emails or instant messages that divert our attention, household chores that will "only take a minute," coffee breaks, and daydreams. Constant distraction hurts us more than we realize, creating a feedback loop of inattention. It's time we understand what all this multitasking is doing to our minds and figure out how to break the cycle.

No matter how good you think you are at it, multitasking doesn't exist. What we're really doing is called task-switching. Our brains can concentrate on only one thing at a time, and the quicker we go back and forth between tasks, the less we pay attention, and the more likely we are to make mistakes. Even worse, research says it takes us a whopping 23 minutes to regain our concentration after being interrupted.

But what can you do? If you've ever been on a diet, you know that willpower has its limits. Simply promising you won't check your email or phone rarely results in long-term success. But if technology is a big part of the problem, it can also be part of the solution. Try putting your email or phone notifications on silent. Or, consider a website blocker to keep you off distracting websites and an app that will lock distracting features on your phone. Low-tech solutions like a "do not disturb" sign and putting your phone in another room can also help.

And mental tricks can still have their place. You probably tend to become productive when you've got a deadline crunch, and there's a reason for that. Tasks have a way of

stretching out unnecessarily when we don't have to follow any restrictions. So, make some! Determine how much time you need to complete a task, and then don't allow yourself anymore. Ask a colleague for help staying accountable. You'll be amazed at how much you get done.

Though we each have to fight our own battles, this isn't entirely our fault. Popular apps make billions of dollars by sucking our attention away from everything else, so we're automatically at a disadvantage. And there may be even more than meets the eye. If you have difficulty concentrating, stress could be the underlying culprit. Get that under control, and distractions might suddenly lose some of their allure.



A LOVE OF LEARNING

STARTS AT HOME

When you were growing up, you probably dreaded going to school as much as any other kid until your parents taught you the value of education. And now, your child may be going through that same phase. Perhaps they're struggling to understand specific concepts, or they're falling behind their peers and are embarrassed. Whatever the case may be for your child, you can use summer to teach them how to love learning and value education as much as you do.

First, you can start by explaining the reasons why education is vital in a relatable way. Use examples from your own educational journey to show how your school experiences developed your critical thinking skills, enhanced your creativity, and put you on a career path that was best for you. If your child enjoys more hands-on activities to learn, engage them in projects or field trips that allow them to touch and interact with materials alongside others. They'll develop a love for learning in a mode that connects with their ideal learning style.

Another way to instill the value of education in your child is to cultivate their passions while teaching them. Take them to the library and check out books about what they love. If they're interested in a certain animal, take them to the zoo or to an aquarium to see it in real life. You can even take them to museums to explore science and history.

Keep in mind that your child is going to mimic your behaviors, so be open-minded when it comes to education and learning. Read your own books alongside your child to motivate them to continue reading independently. Talk about the zoo animals and museum exhibits with your child to further encourage fun conversations about each topic to keep them interested.

Finding activities that encourage your child to grow as a young learner will benefit them, no matter what time of year it is, but fun summertime educational experiences will keep your child entertained and prepared for the next school year!

SITUATION OF THE MONTH

Dear PDTA Pro,

It's summertime, the kiddos are out of school, and man, are we busy. But busy is a great thing, right? We are always on the hunt for ways to stay top of mind with our clients, to increase our engagement, and to celebrate some of the cool things our patients are doing this summer. What advice can you offer?

-In Search of Engagement Advice

Dear In Search of Engagement Advice,

Summer is certainly one of the busiest times for pediatric practices. What better time to bring the children in than while they are out of school? Because many patients and their families are adventuring or taking some great summer trips this time of year, it's the perfect opportunity to embrace their experiences.

One idea that comes to mind is to host a "Where Have Your Flip-Flops Been?" contest on Facebook or another social media platform. All you have to do is take a photo with your staff and post it on social media, captioning it with something summery, asking

patients' parents to take a photo of their child's feet in flip-flops, describing where their flip-flops have been this summer and to post the photo in the comments.

Hosting monthly events in the office is another way to make the office a fun and enjoyable place to visit and to boost engagement. Whether it is a favorite sports team day, crazy hat day, or wacky hair day, enter each participant into a drawing to win. The prize doesn't have to be large; it can be tickets to the movies or the local water park or an ice cream gift certificate.

One more way to boost engagement is to set up a designated area in the office that encourages positive reinforcement and great photo opportunities to share on social media. A possible option is to have a "No Cavities Corner," where the child gets their picture taken if they are cavity-free during their visit. This is not only fun for the child, but it also helps to generate great content to stay top of mind with clients.

Hopefully, you've found some ideas that are helpful. Let us know which ideas you decide to give a try.

-Pediatric Pro

HAVE A LAUGH



HEALTHIER HOT DOGS WITH SLAW

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 green apple, peeled and diced
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 small head red cabbage, cored and shredded
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tbsp grill seasoning
- 3 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 2 tbsp maple syrup
- 8 organic chicken sausage links
- 8 whole-wheat hot dog buns, toasted

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large skillet over high heat, warm the vegetable oil. Sauté the apple, onion, and cabbage and toss until wilted. Season with cumin and grill seasoning and cook for 10–12 minutes, until tender.
2. Add the vinegar and maple syrup, then toss to combine. Cook for 1 minute and set the slaw aside.
3. On the grill, cook your chicken dogs according to the package instructions.
4. Assemble the works, starting with the bun and piling in the chicken dog and slaw.
5. Dig in! For an extra health boost, serve with grilled summer vegetables.

Inspired by RachaelRayMag.com