

## Delta Dental's Top 5 Oral Health Resolutions for 2013

*Arizona's no. 1 dental benefits provider encourages high oral health aspirations*

With a new calendar year on the horizon, many people are engaging in that time-honored American tradition of making resolutions, vowing to improve certain aspects of their lives.

For individuals who aspire to better their oral health in 2013, Delta Dental of Arizona offers the following suggestions to help make these resolutions work.

- **Brush/floss regularly:** The uncomplicated daily one-two punch of brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and flossing once is still the foundation for maintaining healthy teeth and gums. The sooner you can brush following a meal, the better. The longer food stays stuck to your teeth, the more acid is produced that erodes tooth enamel.
- **Visit a dentist in 2013:** Don't delay making an appointment for a check-up. Dentists do more than just check and clean teeth. They can also check for signs of serious oral health problems like oral cancer and gum disease, answer questions and provide advice for adults and children and alert patients to signs of potential medical conditions.
- **Avoid tobacco products:** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), half of the cases of severe gum disease in U.S. adults can be attributed to cigarette smoking, and the prevalence of gum disease is three times higher among smokers than non-smokers.<sup>1</sup> Consuming products like cigarettes, cigars and smokeless tobacco is arguably the single most destructive oral health habit.
- **Eat sweets in moderation:** It was ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle who advised, "Moderation in all things" and that axiom rings especially true for sweet snacks. Tooth decay occurs when candy, cookies, sodas and other sweets, or simple carbohydrates like those in chips or crackers mix with bacteria in the sticky plaque that constantly forms on teeth to produce acid, which can destroy tooth enamel. Whenever possible, stick to having sweets with dinner and brush afterward if possible. Limit sugary snacks because the more times during the day that your teeth are exposed, the longer the acids attack.
- **Wear a mouthguard during contact sports:** It's not just kids who play contact sports these days. Millions of adults participate in competitive sports leagues in which there can be significant risk of contact. Though there is insufficient evidence to suggest mouthguards prevent concussions, they do absorb and distribute the forces that impact the mouth, teeth, face and jaw when an athlete takes a shot to the face. Wearing a mouthguard can prevent chipped, fractured, displaced or dislodged teeth, fractured or displaced jaws, TMJ trauma, and lacerations to the lips and mouth that result from the edges of the teeth.

<sup>1</sup> *Preventing Cavities, Gum Disease, Tooth Loss, and Oral Cancer – 2011 At a Glance.*  
<http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/AAG/doh.htm>. Accessed 2012.