



## 4 STORIES BECOME ONE HOW ALL OF MY GRANDPARENTS INSPIRED MY CAREER

One of my favorite things about my work here at Great Smiles is meeting entire families through my dentist's chair. A lot of my patients send their parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles in to see me. I think it's so cool when this happens! Not only do I get to learn about their families, I also get a multigenerational view of their medical history. It helps me identify conditions that could be inherited, determine risks for younger patients early on, prevent future problems, and be an all-around better dentist.

I really appreciate it when patients like you share family stories with me. So this month, I thought I would share one of my family stories with you! It's National Grandparents' Day on Sept. 12, so talking about my grandparents seems like the perfect place to start.

I didn't realize it until sitting down to write this newsletter, but all four of my grandparents had a huge impact on my life. Without them, I wouldn't be the dentist or the person I am today. My grandparents on my father's side are an obvious example. When I was little, my parents and I lived with them in a family compound in the Philippines. Our houses were side by side, so I spent a lot of time in my grandparents' living room, learning from them and meeting their guests.

My grandpa (Dr. Felipe) was a dentist and examiner for the board of dentistry in the Philippines, and he was active in training new dentists and setting dental policy. People constantly visited him, including dentists from other countries who wanted to observe his work, political officials, and even past presidents! There's a photo of me as a little girl sitting on the lap of the former first lady of the Philippines, all because of the amazing work my grandfather did as a dentist. When I was in dental school, teachers and students often stopped me to share stories about how much my grandfather influenced them. I wish I could talk to him now as a fellow dentist. I'm sure he would have a lot of wisdom to share.

My grandmother on my father's side (Virginia) was



Dr. Felipe and  
Mrs. Virginia Sabater



Gloria and Mario Dela Torre

just as big of an influence on me. She was a professor, and her students often visited our home. She taught business courses along with home economics and was one of the only female teachers at her university. She became a pioneer, constantly lifting other women up and paving the way for the next generation. That was a huge inspiration for me as a little

girl! My grandmother kept her collection of typewriters for teaching in the basement, and I wasn't supposed to go down there, but after I sneaked in once, she gave me my very first typewriter and a book. That's how I learned to type.

On my mother's side of the family, my grandparents were equally amazing. I got to know them because we visited almost every weekend, and they even lived with us on and off while I was growing up. My mom's dad (Mario) was a high-end jeweler who designed beautiful pieces for fashion shows. Looking back, it's amazing how similar his work was to the dentistry my other grandfather did. I watched him cast his jewelry designs in wax and flow metal into them, and it was the exact same process my other grandfather used to make dentures. He taught me the importance of merging beauty and function, which I still use today to design smiles.

Last but not least is my grandmother on my mom's side, Gloria. Most people would assume she was a housewife because she was usually taking care of her eight kids, but in reality, she was a serial entrepreneur. She owned and managed a bunch of local real estate, and her success showed me women can be business owners while raising families. I'll always be grateful for that!

How did your grandparents shape you? Let me know next time I see you in the office (while I don't have anything in your mouth, of course!).

To your great smiles and better health,

*Dr. Michelle Weddle*

# Why Less Than 3% of Dentists Got COVID-19

## AND WHY THAT MATTERS TO YOU



We have always believed that going to the dentist is a safe, effective practice — and now we have proof to back that up.

According to a recent study reported by the American Dental Association (ADA), only 2.6% of dentists in the U.S. were infected with COVID-19 during some of the highest points of infection seen during the pandemic in 2020.

The study surveyed nearly 2,200 dentists across the U.S. each month from June 2020 to November 2020. During this period, the U.S. experienced a spike in cases in the fall. However, dentists only reported a COVID-19 diagnosis among 0.5% to just over 1% each month. In total, less than 3% of dentists reported contracting COVID-19 during this period. In contrast, some reports have seen other medical frontline workers — like doctors and nurses — with an infection rate near 30%.

A few reasons could explain these findings. For starters, dentists don't regularly work with people who are sick or infected, like professionals in hospitals or clinics do. That contributes to a discrepancy between the fields in terms of infection rates.

But more importantly for your family and you, a large reason dentist infection rates remained low during the COVID-19

pandemic is because of standard hygiene procedures and increased usage rates and quality in these procedures.

### **Simply put, dentists have been germaphobes since long before it was cool!**

For starters, masks have always been essential to all dental practices. Everyone on your dental team should “mask up” before entering your room to limit the spread of germs they may be carrying, which could come from another patient or their daily interactions. This made masking easily adaptable for dental practices, and some practices change their masks in between each patient for added safety.

Furthermore, sterilization is vital to the continuation of a dental practice. Assistants, hygienists, and doctors in a dental clinic use their tools in one of your body's most vulnerable places: the mouth. Transmission of viral, blood, and other communicable diseases can all occur within the mouth. For this reason — and because it's gross not to — dental instruments, chairs, countertops, and handles are routinely sanitized and wiped clean between patients.

Finally, dental experts have made significant improvements to an already fairly clean system. When COVID-19 struck our nation, dental practices were forced to shutter for weeks, if not months. Many dentists used this time to install improved air filtration systems in their practices to better clean the air for their patients, who often sit in their clinics with open and exposed mouths. Dental practices also instituted screening measures that have limited exposure among patients and staff.

### **So, what does this mean for you and your family?**

It means you can have peace of mind knowing that a visit to a dental practice will be safe and effective, safeguarding your family from the spread of germs and diseases. The ADA's study proves that hygiene protocols in dental practices do protect staff and patients from contracting illnesses, while providing safe, proactive care for your oral health.

*You can learn more about dental safety practices online at [ADA.org](http://ADA.org) and call us today if you would like to learn more about our hygiene protocols.*



# THE SECRET SAUCE

COOK WITH THE SAME INGREDIENTS WITHOUT GETTING BORED

One upside to spending more than a year at home was that many people donned their aprons, learned new recipes and techniques, and began cooking meals regularly in their own kitchens. Even as restaurants reopen, over 70% of Americans say they'll keep their new habit of cooking at home because it's healthier and cheaper. That said, the average American can only whip up about five meals without a recipe at hand, and many people cook and eat the same types of protein and vegetables over and over.

One easy way to avoid boredom is to keep your main staples but diversify your sauce routine! When in doubt, learn one creamy sauce and one herb- or citrus-based sauce. Here are a few examples that work particularly well for chicken, America's favorite animal protein. These can be used with your other favorite meats and your favorite vegetable preparations, as well!

## 5-Minute Honey Mustard Sauce

To avoid hearing "chicken again?!" add this honey mustard sauce from PinchOfYum.com to your repertoire. Simply whisk together 1/4 cup honey, 1/4 cup mayo, 1/4 cup Dijon mustard, 1 tbsp white vinegar, and 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper for a delicious topper for all meats.



## Simple Lemon Herb Sauce

Want a lighter, healthier option? Go for an oil-and-herb sauce like FoodNetwork.com's "Chicken With a Lemon Herb Sauce." In a blender or food processor, add 1 peeled clove of garlic, 1/4 tsp salt, 1 cup freshly chopped herbs of your choice (they recommend a mix of parsley and mint), 1 1/2 tsp ground pepper, the zest and juice of 1 lemon, and 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil. Pulse all ingredients together until well mixed and the herbs and garlic are coarsely chopped.

## Quick Miso Maple Sauce

This umami-filled sauce from Kitchn.com brings a lot of flavor with just three simple ingredients: 1/2 cup tamari or soy sauce, 1/2 cup maple syrup, and 1/4 cup miso paste. That's it! Whisk the ingredients together and pour over oven-roasted, pan-seared, or grilled chicken and serve.

These three sauces are a great place to start, but if you find yourself uninspired in the kitchen, just look up "simple sauces" online and the protein or vegetable you're preparing. The internet will come to the rescue every time!

TAKE A  
BREAK!



PB&J ON  
A STICK

Inspired by TasteOfHome.com

## INGREDIENTS

- Peanut butter of choice
- Jelly of choice
- Sliced bread
- 1 cup of grapes, red or green
- 2 bananas, peeled and cut into rounds
- Kebab skewers, one per sandwich

## DIRECTIONS

1. Spread peanut butter and jelly onto two pieces of sliced bread and create a sandwich. Make as many sandwiches as you have kebab skewers.
2. Slice the sandwich or sandwiches into four pieces.
3. Slide one piece of sandwich onto a skewer. Follow that piece with one grape, then one banana round. Repeat until the skewer is full or the skewer has four sandwich pieces.

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# PREPPING FOR AN EMPTY NEST?

## 3 THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOUR GRADUATE LEAVES

Congratulations to parents sending their children off to college or “the real world” this year! Parenthood is not for the faint of heart — from toddler meltdowns to angsty teenage years, you might be counting down the days to an empty nest.

Yet, that doesn't make your child moving off to college any easier.

Fear not, for you can help your child live more independently at college in many ways and give yourself peace of mind knowing that your baby is going to be fine.

### Prepare Legal Documents

Once they turn 18, your child is no longer under your care — legally speaking. You can no longer make decisions for them, including medical decisions, should they become incapacitated and unable to make their own decisions. Connect with a trusted attorney to create medical and financial powers of attorney that give you these rights. (Just consult with your child first before doing so!)

### Cover the Household Basics

If there's one thing to look forward to, it's all the laundry you won't have to do anymore. And the fridge will be fully stocked

without ravenous teens emptying it regularly! But before you drop your child off at college or their new home, make sure they can manage laundry, cook basic meals, and keep a tidy space. Some basics to cover include the difference between hot and cold wash and how to make scrambled eggs.

### Make a Budget

Living as a broke young adult is almost like a rite of passage to “real” adulthood, but you can make this experience easier just by opening that often taboo door and talking about money. Explain the processes or budgeting systems that work for your family and guide your child through their potential living expenses. Try test runs so they understand how much they will have to spend on necessities, like groceries, hygiene items, and gas.

Pro Tip: Before your children take off, don't forget to schedule one more dental appointment! We can set up recurring appointments during breaks to ensure their oral health is never compromised.

