



# 4 DENTAL PROBLEMS TO WATCH FOR IN YOUR KIDS

## A DENTIST APPOINTMENT CAN HELP!

We're already a month into 2023, but it's not too late to make one more New Year's resolution. I hope you'll consider this one: "In 2023, I resolve to watch my kids closely for signs of the four most serious dental problems."

If every parent made that resolution this month, we would have millions of happier, healthier kids worldwide. Dental issues early in life can affect your child's physical appearance, behavior, sleep quality, and mental health. Cavities are one of the top four issues, but they're not the only one – they're just the most basic.

In this letter, I will briefly explain the top four dental problems impacting kids and how you can spot them. Then, I'll dive deeper into each topic in the next few months. If you have any questions about these conditions in the meantime, call my office to ask and/or schedule an appointment for your child.

- 1. Cavities** – Everybody knows that cavities (or "Early Childhood Caries" as we call them in dental speak) aren't good for kids. If your child has a cavity, that means their tooth is decaying. It could fall out, and the pain and damage could impact their ability to eat, sleep, and perform well in school. Red flags for cavities include dark or white spots on the teeth, pain, and sensitivity to hot, cold, or sweet foods.
- 2. Early Childhood Malocclusion (ECM)** – If your child has ECM, it means their jaws aren't growing correctly. ECM can cause problems like crowded teeth, a misaligned bite, cracked teeth, gum loss, and even airway issues when the child grows up. To spot ECM, look for signs like buck teeth, an underbite, overbite, crossbite, a weak chin, or a prominent nose.
- 3. Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) Injuries** – Your child's TMJ is connected to their lower jaw, and it's actually a growth plate. Because of that status, TMJ injuries can be just as dangerous to a child's growth and development as a broken leg. You probably know that if a child breaks their leg on the playground, you need to make sure it heals perfectly so that they don't end up with one leg shorter than the other, which could result in coordination issues, back problems, and hip pain later in life. The TMJ is just as important – a child could seriously damage it if they fall and hit their chin.



Dr Weddle's kids: Matthew taking photos of Katie's teeth.

The fall might not seem bad or even cause any bleeding, but it could shock the TMJ and lead to a short bottom jaw that doesn't grow in tandem with the rest of the face, a weak chin, clicking in the jaw, or a jaw that appears pushed to one side. If a child falls and hits their chin – or shows any of those signs of TMJ problems – they need to go to the dentist immediately. The earlier we can catch and treat the issue, the better for their long-term health!

- 4. Mouth Breathing** – Mouth breathing rather than nose breathing might not *sound* dangerous, but it can change your child's jaw structure, bite, face shape, and athletic ability for the worse. Mouthbreathers often have long "horsey" faces, flat noses or cheekbones, asthma, and/or dark bags under their eyes. Keep an eye out for those red flags.

I hope you'll look for signs of these four health problems in your kids, or kids that you care about, even if they're not your kids. If you spot one, you could change the course of their life!

To your great smiles and better health,



# Be Mine! 6 Pieces of Valentine's Day Trivia

The Hallmark cards have hit the shelves, boyfriends and husbands have all scrambled to plan, and the local restaurants are all swimming in reservations – Valentine's Day has arrived! On this day, many are left wondering how far back exchanging valentines goes, why we exchange valentines, and where those little heart-shaped candies come from. Look no further, we have answers for you.

## The first valentine dates back to the 15th century.

According to History.com, the oldest record of a valentine was in 1415 when a French medieval duke named Charles wrote a poem to his wife while in prison. One of the lines read, "I am already sick of love ... My very gentle Valentine."

## Saint Valentine is not the same person.

It's unclear which Saint Valentine the holiday is named after. One was a Roman priest who was sentenced to death after being caught illegally marrying couples during a marriage ban and the other was a man who got caught helping Christians escape into Rome – he later wrote a letter from prison, signing it, "From your Valentine."

HUG  
ME

## Mass-produced valentines weren't a thing until the 1840s.

Known as the Mother of the American Valentine, Esther A. Howland commercialized Valentine's Day cards that were decorated in ribbons and lace (as some are today) in the 1840s.

## Sweethearts candies were born in the 1860s.

Oliver Chase, a Boston pharmacist, created a machine that produced medicinal lozenges (a common way to take medicine back then). With the success of his machine, he decided to use it to make candy as well, and thus Sweethearts were created in the 1860s.

## Valentine's Day is an expensive holiday.

According to the National Retail Foundation, in 2019, Americans spent more than \$20 billion on the holiday to buy gifts that included flowers, chocolates, cards, and jewelry.

## It's a popular day of engagement!

According to a survey by American Express, millions of couples get engaged on Valentine's Day. It was also voted as the best day of the year to pop the magical question.

BE  
MINE

YOU  
ROCK



If you've ever experienced tooth pain, you know how frustrating it can be. Pain can range from a minor annoyance to severe and disruptive if it keeps you up at night and distracts you from your work. And depending on your situation, you may not be able to get in to see a dentist immediately.

To nip the pesky pain in the bud right away, you may wonder if any at-home solutions can tide you over before making it to your dentist. Thankfully, here are seven methods to alleviate tooth pain without a dentist.

### Elevate your head.

When you twist your ankle, you know to prop it up on a pillow and get some rest. This is because when your ankle is in a flat position, gravity increases blood pressure in that area. The same is true for a toothache. If you're trying to sleep through the pain, prop your head up on some pillows or position yourself in an upright chair!

### Apply ice.

Just like you ice a sports injury, you can ice your toothache. Whether you hold ice water in your mouth for many seconds at a time or wrap ice or a

## A Pain in the Mouth!

### 7 Home Remedies for Nagging Toothaches

bag of frozen peas in a towel and apply it to the irritated area, it should help alleviate your oral pain.

### Take some medicine.

Over-the-counter medications such as ibuprofen and aspirin will target your pain and reduce the inflammation in your mouth and teeth. Be sure to take the correct recommended dosage.

### Rinse with salt water.

Saltwater rinses are great for oral health – they dislodge food particles and substances stuck to your teeth and can also reduce inflammation! Mix 1/2 teaspoon salt with warm water and gargle it to reduce pain.

### Apply a peppermint tea bag.

A peppermint tea bag – either warm or cold – can help relieve your toothache and reduce inflammation. Just make sure it isn't too hot or too cold before applying it to the irritated area.

### Rinse with hydrogen peroxide.

Hydrogen peroxide targets inflammation and bacteria in your mouth, which helps with pain. Swish with one part hydrogen peroxide and two parts water.

### Make a garlic paste.

Garlic is a natural pain reliever, and it combats bacteria. Crush up some garlic cloves, make a paste, and then apply it to the sore area!

# YOU CAN HAVE YOUR CAKE AND EAT IT, TOO

## Developing a Healthy Work-Life Balance

Often, the desire to succeed in our professional lives can take precedence over everything else in our private lives, including our well-being, family, friends, and hobbies. Moreover, finding a healthy balance between the two can be challenging as they can begin to blend. Here are the four best ways to keep your work and personal life separate while excelling at both!

### Love what you do.

Loving your job is easier said than done, right? If you can land an enjoyable career that isn't restraining, you'll find it's much easier to leave work at work and home at home. When you're unhappy with your job, it can affect your overall happiness, and feelings of despair can carry into your personal life.

### Don't be a perfectionist.

Career burnout can drastically impact your personal life, so stop trying to control everything.

In reality, perfectionism is out of reach. Constantly striving for perfection can be exhausting, draining, and destructive; at home and in the office.

### Take time to unplug.

If the first thing you do in the morning is go online and check emails, or if you're responding to work texts at the family dinner table, you've certainly crossed the line on balancing your work and home life. Quality time at home should be focused solely on your family, and hours at the office are for business activities. Once you mix the two, it can be tough to turn back.

### Take breaks.

Even 30-second breathers throughout your day can make a drastic difference in improving stress levels, building your concentration, and helping you to feel more engaged — it can even help you to enjoy your job a bit more!

By implementing these tips into your routine, you'll be on your way to a healthier work-life balance, which translates into feeling less stressed, having fewer health issues, being more productive, and having a happier life at work and home.



## Chai-Spice Butternut Squash Smoothie

Inspired by [AmbitiousKitchen.com](http://AmbitiousKitchen.com)



## Ingredients

- 1 ripe banana, frozen
- 1 cup cubed butternut squash, cooked and frozen
- 1/4 cup plain or vanilla Greek yogurt
- 1 cup unsweetened almond milk or coconut milk
- 1 tbsp almond, cashew, or pecan butter (do not use peanut butter, the flavor is overpowering)
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp cardamom
- 1/8 tsp ground ginger
- 1/8 tsp allspice

## Directions

1. In a large, high-powered blender, add all ingredients and blend on high for 1–2 minutes or until all ingredients are well combined. Add more milk if necessary to thin and blend again.
2. Serve and enjoy!

## TAKE A BREAK!



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# SLEEP TIGHT!

## *Tips to Help Kids Get Better Sleep*

If only it were as easy as magic pajamas! Adequate and quality sleep is just as important for kids as it is for adults, but sometimes, children have difficulty falling and staying asleep. To ensure your kids get the sleep they need to grow, lead happy lives, and develop mentally and physically, here are five tips to help them achieve a better night's sleep.

### **Create a routine.**

Children, like adults, are creatures of habit – they thrive with routines. These routines may vary depending on the age of your child. An infant's bedtime routine may include swaddling and turning on a white noise machine. But for a toddler, this may require a bath, reading a book, cuddling, teeth brushing, and singing. With a consistent routine, children know what to expect and are more likely to welcome sleep instead of fighting it. Don't forget to stick to a specific bedtime!

### **Make bedtime special.**

Children may sometimes become unsettled when it's time for bed because they want attention. After long days at school or day care, children may turn to their parents for comfort. By spending 10 minutes talking with your child, cuddling, or reading, they may feel more soothed and relaxed before bed.

### **Reserve the bed for sleep.**

Help your child to associate their bed with sleep. When you allow your children to watch television, read, or play in bed, staying up and engaging in



other activities may feel more normal instead of getting quality sleep. Creating a strong sleep association with their bed early on helps them to fall asleep and stay asleep.

### **Use positive reinforcement.**

On nights when your child falls asleep quickly and stays asleep throughout the night, offer positive rewards. Whether it's a favorite snack, a sticker chart for each day they practice good sleep habits, or a trip to the park, associating positivity with quality sleep will set your child up for sleep success!

### **Eliminate electronics.**

When your child's bedtime approaches, limit screen time. It's widely known that blue light from an electronic screen stimulates the brain, making children feel restless when they should be sleeping. At least 30 minutes before lights out, you should turn off electronics and engage in other aspects of your established routine.