



SEPTEMBER 2025

Why This Team Is One of a Kind

We Talk Wellness, Teeth, and Life — Want to Listen In?

Every Labor Day, I reflect on how grateful I am, not just for the work I get to do, but for the people I get to do it with. Like many dentists, I could say I can't practice without a team, and that's true. But I always add something more: **I can't practice without this team.** The people I work with aren't interchangeable. They're not just coworkers. They're the reason we can provide the kind of care we're known for, and I'm proud to say that every single one brings something exceptional to our practice.

Let me introduce you to them.

Reema is a Registered Dental Hygienist certified wellness coach, and also our office manager. We call her the "Swiss Army Knife" of the office because she truly does it all: clinical care, management, wellness coaching, and even recipe sharing. She's the office mom who reminds us to eat our lunch before diving into a cookie, and she's the one who keeps our health and wellness goals in check.

Jennifer is also a Registered Dental Hygienist and is the Dental Sleep Medicine coordinator for our practice. Her expertise in sleep and airway health is invaluable. She helps our patients understand how something like mouth breathing or muscle function can impact not just their smile, but their overall health. She's part of what makes our practice functionally and structurally forward-thinking.

Then there's **Leydy**, our office administrator and front desk rock

star. She's also our in-house organic food guru. She's passionate about clean living and shares everything from kombucha recipes to tips on eco-friendly food choices. She's a big part of how we bring our wellness philosophy to life in ways our patients can enjoy and relate to.

Xiomara is one of our youngest team members and a rising star. A licensed dental assistant and radiologist, she's pursuing her expanded function license. Recently, she surprised us by saying she's considering dental school. I couldn't be more excited about her future. She's sharp, driven, and incredibly kind.

Beatriz is a Registered Dental Assistant and was my lead restorative assistant for more than a decade before she decided she would like to continue her education in dental hygiene. She is a rock star when it comes to restorative, surgical, and orthodontic care, and I have no doubt she will bring the same expertise to her hygiene practice. She still comes to the office once a week to continue helping our team and patients.

Amy is currently in dental assisting school and works part time, learning everything she can. **Ara** is a Registered Pharmacist who has switched fields and is now helping our patients with insurance processing and digital communication. And speaking of insurance, **Ana** was our previous office manager who comes in seasonally to help out. Her superpower? Getting our patients' benefits paid. You'll hear her



on the phone going to bat for them, and she doesn't back down.

Then we have **Lowela**, our social media assistant, and **Jiselle**, my executive assistant. They both play key roles in keeping us connected and organized behind the scenes.

My-Ann is a Registered Nurse, and **Edmar** is a Registered Physical Therapist. They are both the newest additions to our team. They support our medical records for the sleep medicine and TMJ/Joint Rehabilitation divisions of our practice, as we have grown to become one of the most well-respected and successful programs in the tri-state area.

As you can see, everyone is on their own journey. And we have a common goal: to grow as individuals as we provide valuable services to our patients. We keep pushing the envelope as individuals and as a team to bring our patients the best of what our industry can offer, focusing on proactive care that makes a big difference not only in the oral health but also in the overall health of our patient families.

We exchange ideas all the time on how we can achieve better for ourselves and our patients. In fact, we've tossed around the idea of starting a podcast because some of our best conversations happen right here in the office. Whether we're

Continued on Page 3 ...



THE SAME PLATE DEBATE

HOW VARIETY CAN SAVE YOUR GUT, MOOD, AND MEALS

If you are stuck on your go-to kale smoothie or healthy quinoa salad for lunch, it may be time to shake up your plate and add a little variety to the menu. Eating the same thing every day might seem like a safe bet and an easy way to meal prep in your busy routine. But your body and taste buds deserve new flavors to keep things fresh and boost your immune system. Even the most nutritious diets can easily turn into a food rut. Grab a plate as we explore why you shouldn't eat the same food daily.

Fixation or Food Frustration?

Turning to the same recipes daily could signal something about your mental or emotional health. Variety isn't just crucial for our physical well-

being; it keeps our minds engaged and helps prevent us from feeling blue. People who limit what and how much they eat may have an eating disorder called avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID). ARFID can lead to health problems, as it causes people to avoid certain nutritious foods or not eat at all.

Nutrients Need Newness

Your body needs a variety of nutrients and foods to stay healthy and balanced. If you are eating the same meals, you might miss out on the ingredients your gut microbiome and immune system crave. Repeating recipes too often could lead to nutrient deficiencies and starve your body of proteins and essential vitamins. While

consuming some of the same foods every week is generally fine, change it up enough to get a good mix of antioxidant-rich foods.

Same Bites, Sneaky Signs

By avoiding new cuisine, you could miss essential food allergy or intolerance signs. If you have the same breakfast every morning but don't feel well afterward, trying an alternative could show you that your preferred plateful is actually hurting more than helping. By restricting items in your diet, you could even develop new food sensitivities over time. Listen to your body and be willing to make adjustments if that routine treat is causing discomfort.

The Kid Clock Is Ticking

HIT PAUSE AND SAVOR CHILDHOOD'S LITTLE MOMENTS

One minute they're wobbling through their first steps, the next they're asking for the car keys, and time seems to have sped up somewhere in between. Kids grow up fast, and as parents, it can feel like you've missed out on so much in the whirlwind of school assignments, milestones, and endless to-do lists. You can't stop time, but you can pause and take steps to ensure you make the most of the cherished experiences together.

Choose moments over multitasking.

Distractions are everywhere, from phone notifications in your pocket to the near-constant pressure of maintaining your career. Take every opportunity you can to be present with your kids.



Even if you're just sitting down to watch a movie or all gathered on the patio, put your devices away and focus on what your kids are up to. Engage with them, ask questions, and join in on their games. You can make the most of this precious time by remaining mindful and looking at their smiles instead of screens.

It's more than just a meal.

One of the simplest ways to connect with your kids is to share a meal. This can be tricky with busy school schedules, long work hours, and the natural growing pains and pressures of their getting older. But even one shared meal a week can bring you closer together. Whether breakfast or dinner, when everyone sits at the table to eat, it invites the whole family to open up about their lives, dreams, and plans. No matter how quickly the years seem to fly by, having that daily or weekly moment of connection can create lasting connections and stability.

Love the stage you're in.

Your children will experience many different stages in their lives, and it's important to cherish each as it unfolds. It's easy to mourn the sweetness of their infancy or worry yourself sick about their teenage years. Instead, enjoy the phase they are in and think about how you can support them. Focus on how you're preparing them for what's next, not what you'll miss about their younger years. Keep your sights on their future and all the exciting moments to come.

It's Not Just a Lack of Willpower

THE REAL PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND CRAVINGS

Do you ever find yourself reaching for chocolate late at night or suddenly craving salty chips in the middle of the afternoon? You're not alone and definitely not "lacking willpower." Food cravings are a complex mix of biology, psychology, and emotional cues, and understanding them can help you respond in healthier, more intentional ways.

Cravings are a universal experience.

Studies show that over 90% of people experience food cravings, with women more likely to crave sweet foods like chocolate, and men more often craving savory options like meat or pizza. So, if you've ever thought you were alone in your cravings, know that this is a near-universal human experience.

Your brain's reward system is driving the urge.

Cravings often originate in the brain's limbic system, responsible for behavior, emotion, and long-term memory. When

you're stressed or low, your brain searches for a quick dopamine hit, the "feel-good" chemical. Foods high in sugar, fat, or salt can deliver that boost quickly, which is why comfort foods are hard to resist.

Processed foods foster addiction.

Research from the University of Michigan has shown that highly processed foods can stimulate the brain's reward centers in ways similar to addictive substances. That's why stopping after one cookie or chip can feel nearly impossible — the brain is wired to want more.

Cravings may signal physical needs.

Not all cravings are emotional. Sometimes, your body is genuinely trying to tell you something. For example, craving chocolate may indicate a magnesium deficiency, while craving salty foods can indicate dehydration or a lack of electrolytes. That said, it's essential to pause and



assess. Not every craving means your body needs that exact food.

Memories and emotional triggers play a role.

Many food cravings are tied to learned behaviors and emotional associations. If you were rewarded with sweets as a child, your brain might now associate ice cream with comfort or safety. These conditioned patterns are powerful, but you can reprogram them.

Food cravings aren't just about what's in the pantry. They're about what's happening in your brain, body, and emotions. When you understand the drivers of your cravings, you can make choices that support your well-being instead of fighting these urges blindly.

CREAMY CAULIFLOWER SOUP

Inspired by CookieAndKate.com

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large head cauliflower, cut into bite-size florets
- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1/4 tsp fine sea salt, plus more
- 1 medium red onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, pressed or minced
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
- 2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley, chives, or green onions for garnish

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 425 F.
- On a rimmed baking sheet lined with parchment paper, toss cauliflower with 2 tbsp olive oil.
- Arrange cauliflower in a single layer, sprinkle with a little salt, and bake 25-35 minutes until tender.
- In a soup pot, warm remaining olive oil and cook onion and 1/4 tsp salt until soft.
- Add garlic and cook 30 seconds until fragrant, then add broth.
- Add all but 4 cauliflower florets to the pot and simmer for 20 minutes.
- Transfer mixture to a blender, add butter, and blend until smooth. Then blend in lemon juice and nutmeg.
- Garnish with cauliflower florets and serve. Add parsley, onion, and chives as desired.

... continued from Cover

chatting about dental care, nutrition, sleep health, or stress management, it often feels like the kind of content people would love to hear. So, we're putting the question to you: *Would you listen to a podcast from our team?*

Scan the QR code below and let us know what you think! Your vote could help us launch a fun new way to connect, share, and grow together. As always, thank you for being part of our extended dental family.

To your great smiles and better health,

Dr. Michelle S. Wall



**SCAN
ME!**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1. Big Hearts, Bright Smiles, and Bold Ideas — Your Vote Counts!**

- 2. Mix It Up for Maximum Nutrition**
Slowing Down to Enjoy Every Growth Stage

- 3. What Your Food Cravings Are Trying to Tell You**
Creamy Cauliflower Soup

- 4. The Power of Everyday Walking**

CAN YOU WALK YOUR WAY TO STRONGER MUSCLES?

THE SECRET TO STRONGER STRIDES

When you think of building muscle, what comes to mind? For most people, it's likely lifting exercises or equipment like free weights and strength training machines. But what about walking? You're probably not thinking about building muscle when you go for a walk. It's too simple and gentle an exercise, right? That's true, but with the right intensity, duration, and frequency, it can also support muscle growth.

If you've ever walked up a big hill or taken a brisk loop around your neighborhood, you probably know what it's like to feel your calves burn. That soreness is a sign of muscle fatigue and development. To build muscle, our bodies must experience enough resistance to break down muscle fibers. When those fibers are repaired, the muscles get stronger

and thicker. You probably won't achieve this on a casual stroll, but picking up the pace, especially on an incline, can increase muscle activation significantly.

Incorporating inclines into your walks is one of the best ways to increase the muscle-building benefits of walking, but walking on uneven terrain can also help. Walking on sand and dirt trails makes your calf muscles work harder and can even help engage other muscle groups, including those in your core, thighs, and glutes. Another strategy is to add weighted gear, like a weighted vest, ankle weights, or even a loaded backpack. Adding weight can also help you burn more calories on your walks.

Of course, none of these strategies will give you a rippled physique through



walking alone. You should prioritize activities that use fast-twitch muscle fibers to really bulk up. These activities require sudden bursts of energy, such as weightlifting, sprinting, and jumping. You also need to focus on a healthy diet and ensure adequate protein intake.

Walking might not be ideal for muscle growth, but it's still a great everyday activity. It increases your heart rate, helps maintain flexibility and balance, and promotes overall fitness. And even if it won't leave you flexing in front of the mirror, it can help increase tone and build strength where it counts.