

# THE ORAL HEALTH EXPERT

DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA

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## OPEN WIDE SEE WHAT'S INSIDE



**P.2** Common Causes of Gingivitis



**P.3** Good News About Fighting Bad Breath



**P.4** Healthy Recipe: Prosciutto-Wrapped Asparagus

## How to Pick the Perfect Toothpaste



When shopping for toothpaste, it's easy to get overwhelmed by the many different brands and varieties. Fortunately, you can ask your dentist or dental hygienist for their recommendations and follow this guide to help you make the best decisions.

It never hurts to do a little research before you head to the store. Many dental care brands have their products' claims and ingredients on their website.

When buying toothpaste or any other dental care product, try looking for the American Dental Association (ADA) Seal of Acceptance. The ADA seal on a product means that it meets the ADA's requirements for safety and efficacy.

It's also important to take note of a toothpaste's ingredients. To help prevent tooth decay when brushing, choose a toothpaste that contains fluoride. Fluoride can help prevent cavities and make tooth enamel stronger. Watch out for toothpaste trends, such as charcoal-activated toothpastes or other DIY versions. These products often do not contain fluoride and have acidic or abrasive ingredients that can damage teeth.

Finally, check a toothpaste's label to see if it has any added benefits, such as:

- Reducing gingivitis
- Controlling tartar
- Preventing bad breath
- Whitening teeth
- Desensitizing teeth

# Common Causes of Gingivitis



Gingivitis is a mild form of gum disease that occurs when bacteria in plaque (a sticky, colorless film that forms in the mouth) builds up over time along and below the gumline. This bacteria produces acids that irritate gums and damage tooth enamel. If plaque is left long enough, it can cause serious complications, like bone and tooth loss.

## What are the Risk Factors for Gingivitis?

Certain habits and conditions can increase your risk of gingivitis, including:

- **Poor oral hygiene:** Inconsistent brushing or flossing or frequently missing the same areas of the mouth allows plaque to grow.
- **Dry mouth:** Lack of saliva can lead to an increased build-up of plaque and gum irritation.
- **Smoking/tobacco use:** Research shows that smoking doubles your risk of gum disease.<sup>1</sup>
- **Medical conditions:** Certain diseases, like diabetes and HIV, hinder your body's ability to fight infection.
- **Hormonal shifts:** Puberty, pregnancy, menopause and other hormonal changes can make your gums sensitive.
- **Medication:** Certain over-the-counter and prescription drugs can make you more prone to gum disease.
- **Age:** Research shows that as we age, our risk for gum disease increases.
- **Genetics:** Studies show that some people are more prone to gum disease simply because of genetic factors.

The good news is that gingivitis can be controlled and treated with proper oral hygiene and regular dental cleanings and exams. Your dentist or hygienist can identify gingivitis early on and provide you with the knowledge you need to efficiently remove plaque and prevent future problems.

# SMILE STATS



Flossing is key to good oral health, but studies show only 30% of Americans floss daily.<sup>2</sup>



Humans aren't the only species with a dental care routine. Monkeys use grass, bird feathers and coconut fibers to floss their teeth.<sup>3</sup>



Trying to fight bad breath? Parsley, yogurt and celery are 3 foods that can help hide halitosis.<sup>4</sup>

# Good News About Fighting Bad Breath



**Bad breath, also known as halitosis, can be embarrassing. But it's quite common and usually curable. In fact, more than 50% of the world's population has issues with bad breath.<sup>5</sup> Here are some tips to fight bad breath and keep your mouth feeling fresh!**

## **How Does Bad Breath Develop?**

In general, bad breath is caused by odor-producing bacteria and the bad-smelling compounds released by bacteria. Chronic bad breath can be the result of:

- Poor oral hygiene, tooth decay or dry mouth
- Respiratory tract infections, like sinusitis or tonsillitis
- Other medical conditions
- Certain medications
- Tobacco usage

Temporary bad breath is often caused by certain foods and beverages. Spicy foods, tuna, onions and garlic top the charts for foods that can give you bad breath.

## **Ways to Keep Your Breath Fresh**

- Visit your dentist regularly
- Maintain daily oral hygiene habits
- Replace your toothbrush every 3 to 4 months
- Clean dentures, retainers and mouth guards daily or after each use
- Chew sugar-free gum sweetened with xylitol to help stimulate saliva flow
- Drink plenty of water to wash food and bacteria away and help prevent dry mouth
- Avoid tobacco use of any kind

It's important to keep your smile healthy. Maintain a daily dental care routine and visit your dentist regularly to keep your mouth in tip-top shape and your breath fresh.

# MOUTH-HEALTHY RECIPE: PROSCIUTTO-WRAPPED ASPARAGUS

## Ingredients:



1 tablespoon olive oil



1 pound asparagus spears



Pinch of black pepper



Pinch of salt



1 ounce Parmigiano-Reggiano  
cheese, grated



½ pound thinly sliced prosciutto

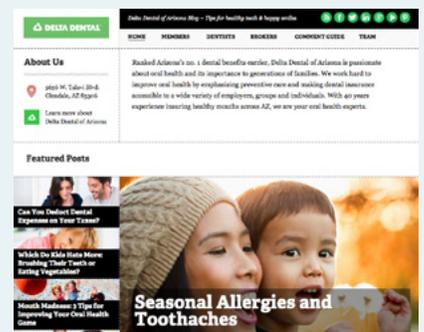
## Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425 F.
2. Wash and trim the rough ends off the asparagus.
3. Place asparagus on a sheet pan and drizzle with olive oil, salt and pepper. Toss well until asparagus is fully coated.
4. Evenly distribute the cheese onto the slices of prosciutto.
5. Place an asparagus spear onto each slice of prosciutto and roll it up.
6. Arrange in a single layer on baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes.
7. Top with more cheese if desired.

WANT MORE ORAL HEALTH TIPS AND NEWS?

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[deltadentalazblog.com](http://deltadentalazblog.com)



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## SOURCES

<sup>1</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/diseases/periodontal-gum-disease.html>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2016-05-02/how-many-americans-floss-their-teeth>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/11/monkeys-may-have-better-dental-hygiene-you>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.everydayhealth.com/dental-health/foods-that-mask-bad-breath.aspx>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.colgateprofessional.com/patient-education/halitosis/bad-breath-do-you-have-it>