

Oral Health Survival During the Holidays

Holidays, especially during the festive season can easily distract us from our oral health care. These periods are often the most important to be mindful of good oral hygiene as our intake of high-sugar and unhealthy foods increases.

Consuming food mindfully

Dentists like everyone love to celebrate during the festive season; after all, it is a time for indulgence, and even dentists indulge a little, however, they do this mindfully.

It is important to ask yourself if I need another bowl, am I still hungry, or am I eating purely for the lovely taste of the Christmas chocolates. Be mindful and limit the extra amount of food consumed to best look after your mouth and teeth.



Chewy Lollies and hard candy

Chewy lollies and hard candies are terrible for your teeth. Hard candies and tough chewy lollies are often to blame for cracking teeth or breaking fillings. These types of confectionery are often made from 100% sugar and take long periods to consume, exposing teeth to dangerous levels of sugar for far too long increasing the risk of tooth decay. It is recommended to replace these with more tooth-friendly treats.



Sugar drinks and alcohol

Just like food, we tend to consume more alcohol and sugary drinks during festive periods. These types of drinks are both high in sugars and acids. Sugar feeds bad bacteria in the mouth that grow into plaque infestations. Acids can erode the enamel lining



that protects the teeth. Sugar and acid combined is dangerous, greatly increasing your risk of tooth decay and gum disease.

Wait 30 minutes after consuming acidic food or drink before brushing your teeth. The mouth's PH levels will be highly acidic and brushing teeth at these times will help the acids erode the enamel lining of your teeth.



Oral Hygiene Routine – REMEMBER YOUR TOOTHBRUSH

It is important to maintain your daily oral hygiene routine. It is easy to forget, with all the fun distractions that come with being on holiday, especially for children. Continue to brush your teeth twice a day. Interdental cleaning (floss and interdental brushes) should occur at least once a day.

It is all recommended to rinse your mouth out with water after meals or snacks and acidic beverages. This will help to rebalance the PH levels inside the mouth and increase saliva flow.

Mouthguards

It is easy to forget mouthguards when going on holiday. Though your children may not be competing in any club sports over these periods, we don't forget to take our helmets when we take the bikes on holiday. Mouthguards should be treated the same – especially when backyard cricket is a huge winner for beach and backyard fun. Dentists often see an increase in acute mouth trauma with children during the holiday periods. Remember, it is always best to get a custom-fitted mouthguard compared to over-the-counter DIY mouthguards. They provide better protection.

Access your dental entitlements

Be sure to be aware of the Child Dental Benefits Schedule. You can check your eligibility through Medicare on your MyGov account.

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Gifts, packages, and other items

With all the many gifts being handed out in the festive season, or the many snack foods being consumed, or even hard shell nuts, don't be tempted to use your teeth to open these items. It is possible to fracture your teeth or cut gums and lips. Kids can be notorious for this. Use items that are designed for this purpose like a pair of scissors or a nut-cracker.

Looking after your teeth while on holidays and travelling

Holiday periods become busy quickly and can sometimes be stressful for many people. Nail biting and clenching can increase during holidays. Try to be mindful and avoid stressful situations where possible. Both of these habits can cause teeth to wear down faster. If you suffer from Bruxism (clenching and grinding) speak with your dentist about potentially breaking the habit as well as preventing damage to your teeth.

It can also be beneficial to see your dentist before traveling. Nipping any potential problems in the bud before extended periods away could negate the need for emergency dental treatments and more costly procedures.

It is important to be aware of the potential need for emergency dental care during the holiday period even if you are not away travelling, your dentist may be. Find out when your dentist is away and where the closest emergency dental care is in your area.

Remember moderation and mindfulness is the key, you can still indulge and have a merry time.

Diamond or sapphire nail file - always have one handy when you are away from your home on holidays. A tooth can break and there can be a sharp edge. The sharp edge can be gently filed to minimize ulcerating the tongue or cheek and they can be hygienically cleaned.

Temporary filling material - if you lose a filling and have an annoying gaping hole in one of your teeth, temporary dental fillings can help. Check for availability at your local chemist.

Pain management - depending on your risk factors paracetamol or ibuprofen or a combination of both are useful to have on hand. Please use them within the recommendations on the packet and if pain is not



resolved when these are taken or if pain persists for more than two to three days seek medical or dental help wherever you are. Dr Bob Cvetkovic can also be reached by phone or email if there is an emergency, where a telephone conversation could help with advice.

If you have any questions prior to holidays, feel welcome to contact Dr Bob Cvetkovic during office hours. If there is a problem whilst you are on holiday he can be contacted on the emergency mobile number you have been given or if you are overseas contact the practice by phone or email.

