



## CHECKUPS, CLEANINGS, AND SLEEP, OH MY!

### MEET JENNIFER, OUR HYGIENIST AND SLEEP MEDICINE COORDINATOR

*In last month's newsletter, I gave you a little behind-the-scenes look at Reema's life. I had no idea that she wanted to be a pharmacist before going into dentistry, did you? This month, I'd like to give another member of my team the stage — Jennifer, our registered dental hygienist (RDH) and sleep medicine coordinator. Not only does she help me treat sleep problems, but she also offers gentle cleanings our patients love.*

*I sometimes joke that Jennifer is my translator, because she's great at listening to my highly technical "dental speak" (which can sometimes sound like a foreign language) and explaining it in ways our patients can understand. I know it's thanks to her that our patients get things like airway therapy, its role in overall health, and why it's so important for adults and kids to get good sleep. I owe her big time!*

*On top of her professionalism, Jennifer is a lot of fun to be around. I'm sure you'll get that feeling about her too.*

You make me sound like a superhero, Dr. Weddle! I think the real reason I'm so good at "translating" complicated dental concepts into layman's terms is that for me, dental sleep medicine is personal. I started doing research into sleep apnea treatment years ago when I found out my husband had a mild case. I wanted to help him out, and the more I learned, the more fascinated I became!

Since I've already explained sleep disordered breathing to him and our kids (ages 2, 5, and 7), explaining it to our patients is easy. I like being the go-between who meets with patients over the phone and in the office, tells them what to expect, and coordinates their visits and treatment plans.

So many people suffer from sleep disordered breathing that connecting them with myofunctional therapy, oral appliances, and surgical procedures to take their treatment to the next level has become a real passion for me. (For example, did you



know that you can't rely on an oral appliance forever? Most people don't, but Dr. Weddle and I can help you discover other long-term options that will change your life for the better.) I particularly love when I can help adults. It's easier to treat airway issues in kids, but we can do a lot for adults now, too.

Fortunately, when I found out about my husband's breathing problems, I had already been a dental hygienist for years. (The fascination started back when I was a nosy kid and my parents brought me to their dental appointments. Our family dentist was an awesome guy who let me watch their procedures.) After two decades in the field and seven years with Great Smiles, I'm more excited about dentistry than ever.

When I'm not working, my whole family loves to ride bikes, go hiking, and visit the beach. We're also avid gardeners! We plant flowers and harvest our own vegetables. Staying active and eating healthy is important to me, and it's connected right back to my work, because I believe dentistry is all about treating patient wellness as a whole — not just about teeth!

To your great smiles and better health,

*Jennifer Reis Sagumeri, RDH*

# THE ANTI-INFLAMMATORY YOU NEED?

## A TIKTOK TREND INVOLVING PINEAPPLE JUICE

Getting your wisdom teeth removed is a rite of passage for many young dental patients, and it doesn't come without its fair share of stories. From viral videos of woozy patients crying post-surgery to entire blog posts about what to eat afterward, there's no shortage of "expert" tips.

In the last year, several videos of people drinking 64 ounces of pineapple juice prior to wisdom teeth surgery have gone viral on TikTok. The idea is that because pineapple contains bromelain, which acts as a natural anti-inflammatory, drinking the juice prior to surgery can reduce or eliminate potential swelling after the operation. The video makers claim that their swelling was minor post-surgery and encourage others to try this "hack."

They may not be *totally* wrong. A 2014 study found that patients who were given bromelain supplements after wisdom teeth extraction surgery experienced less



inflammation than their placebo counterparts. Another 2016 study found that bromelain offered a powerful boost to those who also took amoxicillin (which can have anti-inflammatory properties) post-surgery. It's worth noting, though, that none of these studies included pineapple juice; patients were given supplements instead.

Before you buy all the pineapple juice you can find, dental experts are cautioning patients against this trend. The reason is simpler than you think: **It's bad for your teeth!**

Pineapple juice is highly acidic, and it contains high levels of sugar. So, while you may lower your chances of swelling post-surgery, you could create an unhealthy oral environment right before a major trauma occurs in your mouth. Drinking something so acidic with open wounds in your mouth can be dangerous and painful, too. Furthermore, other health experts point out that too much pineapple juice can wreak havoc on your digestive system, menstrual health, and heart health.

So, 64 ounces of pineapple juice may not be the answer for wisdom teeth surgery swelling, but dental professionals do greenlight drinking a serving or two prior to surgery — and before they need to stop eating or drinking — if patients wish to do so. It just may offer the little boost you need without the negative impacts of too much juice.

## SHOULD YOUR CHILDREN PLAY FOOTBALL?

February is host to a sports tradition that dates back more than half a century: Super Bowl Sunday! Whether your team is playing or not, the Super Bowl is the NFL's biggest stage, and it's arguably one of the most-watched events on the sports calendar.

For impressionable kids, watching players on the world's biggest stage can be like watching their heroes duke it out, inspiring many to join their own peewee leagues. But is that safe? In recent years, increased reports of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) among retired players have some parents questioning if this great American tradition is worth it.

Here's what you need to know.

### Physical activity always comes with risks.

It's important to remember that all forms of sports can induce injury. Your child can sprain their ankle running in

track and field, just as they can while running down the football field. Proper technique, great coaching, up-to-date equipment, and clean play can all deter potential injuries. But fear of injury is not reason enough to keep a child out of a sport that can teach discipline, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

### However, prolonged exposure is the issue.

This is where football deviates. While any sport increases the risk of injury, football's consistent exposure to contact is what makes it more dangerous. A 2017 Boston University study first exposed this, citing that more than 99% of the 202 former NFL players had CTE, often categorized as a complex brain injury. That's terrifying news for any parent.

### But knowing the risk can reduce the exposure.

Since these findings have been made public, the NFL and youth football

leagues have made changes to their concussion protocols, equipment, and tackling techniques.

In fact, concussion reports in the NFL dropped by 24% in 2018. Furthermore, parents can arm themselves with this information not to discourage their children from playing football but to instead encourage safer play styles. For example, flag football can be a safer, healthier alternative for young players.

If you're concerned about your little footballer hitting the field, talk to your child's physician about risks and preventive measures. And ask us about our mouthguard options for dental protection!



# 3 Fridge Hacks

## TO BRING PEACE TO YOUR KITCHEN



We all have our favorite ways to organize, but there may be one thing you're organizing completely incorrectly: your refrigerator. It's not just about aesthetics! A properly organized fridge can prevent food from spoiling, help you find items faster, and allow you to store more. Try these tips for fridge success.

### Store produce properly.

There are a lot of myths surrounding what you should or shouldn't do to properly store your produce, but there are a few basics you can abide by. For starters, store your fruits and vegetables separately. Fruits emit a gas

that can cause vegetables to spoil faster. Furthermore, store these products near the front of your fridge or in a place where you will regularly notice them. This will encourage you to use the products faster — and prevent you from forgetting about them.

### Remove products from packaging.

Individually wrapped products make packing lunches easy, but they can be a hassle to store in the fridge when kept inside bulky boxes. Instead, line up your yogurts, string cheese, hummus, juice boxes, sodas, and other individually wrapped products along the shelves of your fridge or in refrigerator bins. This will eliminate the clutter of the packaging from your fridge and provide more space.

**Pro Tip:** For a more eco-friendly option, stop buying individually packaged items! Opt for bulk or larger products instead and measure out serving sizes into small glass or reusable containers. Arrange these like you would the other products!

### Invest in refrigerator bins.

Storage bins for your fridge are all the rage right now, and there might be a reason for that. Refrigerator bins are clear and rigid in shape, which means items store and organize easier in your fridge. You can fill one with yogurt, another with eggs, and a third with fruit without worrying how the shapes of these products will fit into your fridge space. This allows you to have more control over your refrigerator.

*If you want to get more out of your fridge, check out the manual! It will include proper ways to utilize your refrigerator storage and settings.*

TAKE A  
BREAK!



## CHERRY CORDIAL CAKE BALLS

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

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 package fudge marble cake mix
- 1 1/4 cups and 3 tbsp brewed coffee, divided
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 3 eggs
- 10 oz maraschino cherries, stemmed, drained, and chopped
- 1/3 cup brandy
- 1/4 cup cherry preserves
- 1 cup chocolate frosting
- 1 lb chocolate candy coating, chopped

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a large bowl, combine cake mix, 1 1/4 cups coffee, canola oil, and eggs. Beat on low for 30 seconds, then on high for 2 minutes.
2. Preheat the oven to 350 F.
3. Pour batter into a greased, floured 9-by-13-inch baking pan. Bake for 30-35 minutes and let cool.
4. In a small bowl, combine cherries, brandy, cherry preserves, and remaining coffee.
5. Crumble cake. Add frosting and cherry mixture. Combine and shape into 1-inch balls.
6. Melt chocolate coating, following package directions.
7. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Dip balls into coating. Let them stand on the paper for 20 minutes, then serve!

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# CELEBRATE CHINESE NEW YEAR!

## HONOR THE YEAR OF THE TIGER

Happy Chinese New Year! Often referred to as Lunar New Year, due to the holiday's connection to the moon cycle, Chinese New Year is a 16-day holiday steeped in tradition. Don't let it pass without marking the momentous occasion that's celebrated across the globe.

To commemorate the Year of the Tiger, try these fun and easy activities.

### Read about legends.

After centuries of celebrations, there are bound to be a few legends worth learning about! Why not make it into a bedtime story or an anecdote for your next family gathering? For example, you could "wow" your children with the story of Nian, a monster who would attack at the start of every new year but was afraid of loud noises, bright lights, and the color red. To ward off Nian each year, people would dress in red and shoot fireworks, celebrating a new year and keeping Nian safely at bay. Pair this story with a red meal to really sell the impact!

### Learn calligraphy.

This is the perfect activity for little crafters! Calligraphy is a major component of Chinese New Year decor. Those who celebrate

often hang hand-painted, square red banners that feature certain words intended to induce good luck in the new year. Learn the art of calligraphy as you master Chinese symbols to create your own piece of good luck in the year of the tiger!

### Enjoy a tasty meal.

This has to be the best option, right? Create a feast to ring in the new year. Everyone will love the classics, like dumplings, noodles, or spring rolls, but don't be afraid to try something new. Fish and chicken are common on Chinese New Year festivities, and many families will cook these items whole. Doing so is considered a strong sign for the family, and fish is meant to symbolize wealth, while chicken represents togetherness. In addition to this, nian gao is a sweet rice dish that can be the perfect way to end your meal.

If this is your first Chinese New Year celebration, ChineseNewYear.net has all the basics covered for you.

