

CURB YOUR CRAVINGS

The next time you're craving some sweets, go outside and take a little walk instead. A little natural light and exercise could be just the thing to reduce your need for sweets.

A recent study has shown that during the dark days of the colder months or rainy days of spring, serotonin levels drop and the urge to eat increases. During these periods, reaching for starchy or sweet comfort foods can be easier to do. However, although your mood may improve some, they aren't the best choices for your teeth or your waistline.

The same study found that getting natural light helped increase serotonin levels and curb cravings. In addition, getting a little extra exercise can help improve your mood without affecting your teeth, and might even help you keep your weight under control.



WHAT'S IN YOUR MOUTH?

Do you know the names of the different parts of your mouth? Sure, you say. There's the teeth, tongue.... Yes, those are parts of your mouth, but we're thinking of some parts you may never have heard of. We check the health of these different mouth parts and surfaces each time you have a dental exam and cleaning. We hope you find learning about these areas of your mouth as interesting as we do. Check out the terms below, and listen for them the next time we're checking out your mouth.

LINGUAL This area is comprised of the inside surfaces of your teeth—the parts that are easiest to touch with your tongue. The lingual surfaces are on the lower teeth.

PALATAL This is the same inside surface as the lingual, but the palatal surfaces are on the upper teeth rather than the lower.

DISTAL This may sound like part of a flower, but it's actually the side of the tooth that is located towards the back of the mouth.

MESIAL The mesial surface is the opposite of the distal in that it is the surface of the tooth toward the front of the mouth.

LABIAL These are the outer surfaces of the teeth that are against the lips.

CUSPS The raised sections of the biting surfaces of your teeth are called the cusps.

OCCUSAL This is the chewing surface of a back tooth.

INCISAL This is the biting surface of a front tooth.

CAN MOUTH ULCERS BE AVOIDED?

Mouth ulcers are among the most irritating of ailments. It can take up to two weeks to heal one, and during that time, the discomfort can be intense. Canker sores make eating, drinking, and speaking difficult and painful. Many people (as many as 20 percent of us) suffer from them—sometimes experiencing the first one by age ten. Although it's not clear exactly what causes mouth ulcers and why some people seem more susceptible to them than others, there are things you can do to help prevent outbreaks.

First, avoid certain foods. Some foods are known to trigger the eruption of mouth ulcers. Some of these are more obvious because of their acidic nature. These include lemons, tomatoes, apples, pineapples, and vinegar. Others, such as barley, flour, buckwheat, whole wheat, cheese, and milk, may surprise you. In addition, nuts, figs, soy, chocolate, and some mustards are linked to mouth ulcers. Foods that are hard to chew or crunchy can also irritate tender oral tissues, so you might want to avoid these as well.

Second, stress and stressful habits can also lead to this problem. When the body reacts to outside stresses, the chances of an ulcer forming increase. Habits triggered by stress, such as biting the inside of the mouth or lips, can also cause ulcers to appear.

Third, the way you brush your teeth can actually have an adverse effect on the inside of your mouth and may result in ulcers. Using a hard toothbrush or simply brushing too hard can damage the insides of your cheeks and lips and allow ulcers to form. If you wear a mouthguard, bleaching trays, or a retainer, it's important to brush these appliances inside and out between uses.

Finally, many people notice a significant reduction in the number of mouth ulcers they experience when they switch to a brand of toothpaste that doesn't contain SLS (sodium lauryl sulfate). This detergent is used in many types of soaps and cleaners and has been linked to changes in the mouth that make you more likely to develop ulcers. Ask us for the names of toothpastes that don't contain this ingredient.

If you find that you're having to deal with painful mouth ulcers on a regular basis, talk to us. We can help find the solution to your problem and relieve the pain that mouth ulcers cause.

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dental newsletter!*

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Can't make your appointment?

If you can't make a scheduled appointment, please contact us and let us know. If at all possible, we would like to know 24 hours in advance. We have three main reasons for this. First, it gives us a chance to reschedule your appointment to a time that's most convenient for both you and us. Second, it gives us a chance to call another patient to schedule a visit for that time. Finally, it keeps us working productively—providing the good dental care that is the goal of our practice.

We understand that there are times when you just can't call us 24 hours in advance. We know that emergencies do happen. Some days you have car trouble, you wake up not feeling well, or your child is sick. In these situations, we simply ask that you contact us as soon as possible. Otherwise, please let us know a day ahead of time. That way, we can continue to provide you and all our patients with the best and most timely service possible.

What's NOT in your water?

Not everyone has fluoridated tap water. Some people have wells or other sources of water that don't contain fluoride. Some people don't feel comfortable about using their tap water, and they've switched to bottled water. Whatever the reason, their children may not be getting the fluoride they need to develop healthy teeth.

Fluoride tablets that are swallowed work by getting into the bloodstream and then into the developing teeth. The fluoride strengthens the growing teeth and makes them more cavity-resistant before they even appear in the mouth.

Correct use of fluoride has been shown to reduce decay by about half. If your children aren't receiving fluoride in the water they drink, talk to us about drops or tablets, or look for bottled waters that contain fluoride to help your children grow strong teeth that are more resistant to decay.

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