



Mental health and stress resilience

Stressed out? Your dentist can tell

During routine dental exams, dentists are able to detect oral symptoms of stress, including grinding teeth, clenching jaws, mouth sores and gum disease. If you're feeling tense or anxious, you should keep an eye out for the following stress-related conditions:

Bruxism, the technical term for grinding teeth and clenching jaws, may be caused by nervous tension, anger or frustration.

Temporomandibular disorders (TMD), a group of conditions that affect the jaw joint, have symptoms including jaw pain or popping and clicking.

Canker sores, or mouth ulcers, generally occur inside the mouth and are not contagious. Studies show they may be triggered by stress.

Gum disease, or gingivitis, is more likely to develop and to increase in severity if you're stressed.

One of the best ways to fight the negative effects of stress is to remove the source of stress. Depending on your symptoms, your dentist can also recommend specific treatments.

Source: *Delta Dental*

Trivia time:

What common sunburn treatment also is effective to treat canker sores?

Answer: *Aloe vera juice.*

4 signs that you grind your teeth

If you routinely grind your teeth or clench your jaws, you may have a condition called bruxism. It's important to seek treatment if you think you have bruxism, which can be caused by anxiety. Symptoms include:

- > Tips of the teeth appear flat
- > Tooth enamel is rubbed off, causing sensitivity
- > Popping and clicking of the jaw
- > Tongue indentations

Your dentist can determine whether you have bruxism. If so, they can work with you to find the best treatment.

Source: *Delta Dental*

Relaxation can help reduce jaw pain

More than 10 million Americans suffer from jaw and facial muscle conditions known as temporomandibular disorders (TMD). Stress can worsen symptoms, but simple self-care practices, such as exercising to reduce teeth-clenching caused by stress, can help ease TMD pain. Your dentist may also recommend:

- > Resting the joint, taking aspirin or ibuprofen, or applying moist heat
- > Practicing relaxation techniques, like meditation
- > Wearing a nightguard to prevent your teeth from grinding during sleep
- > Fixing poorly aligned teeth

Sources: *Delta Dental, Academy of General Dentistry and the American Dental Association, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research*

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