

UNITED CONCORDIA® DENTAL  
Protecting More Than Just Your Smile®

March 2020

## Oral Wellness Newsletter

*This March, we're sharing content in support of National Sleep Awareness Month and National Nutrition Month. Forward the whole newsletter. Or highlight a few selected articles, then copy and paste them wherever you like. Enjoy!*



### Tired of sleep issues?

Are you a restless sleeper who snores at night? Do you wake up feeling tired and cranky? You may have sleep apnea, a condition where your breathing pauses during sleep.

In order to start breathing again, your body suddenly rouses itself. It's like someone shaking you awake as many as 30 times an hour![1]

Sleep apnea is the most common undiagnosed sleep disorder in America.[2] In fact, nearly 80% of sufferers don't realize they have it.[3] Sleep apnea is a serious health condition that can increase your risk of heart attack, complicate taking certain medications and even cause eye problems.[4]

Evidence of sleep apnea can be seen in the throat and mouth, and your dental professional is trained to recognize the oral signs. That's why it's important to keep up with your regular exams and cleanings, especially if you're at risk for sleep apnea. If your dental professional suspects sleep apnea, you'll likely be referred to a specialist for further evaluation and treatment.

[Learn sleep apnea risks and treatment](#)

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### The link between sleep apnea and oral health

Believe it or not, your quality of sleep can affect your oral and overall health. Sleep apnea side effects are linked to poor oral health and increased risks for some chronic diseases.

A recent study shows that sleep disorders, especially sleep deprivation, can weaken your immune system and boost your risk of gum disease.[5] The researchers found that sleep disorders are connected to higher levels of gum inflammation, which may increase the risks for developing heart disease.

People with sleep apnea often wake up with a dry mouth, which also increases the risk of cavities and gum disease. Your dentist will screen for gum disease during your preventive exam and recommend treatment if necessary.

[Read about gum disease and your heart](#)



## Added sugar: why it's not so sweet

Glucose, fructose, maltose and dextrose. They're chemical names for sugar added during the processing of many foods and drinks we consume each day. Sure, it makes things tastier, but added sugar only adds extra calories, not nutritional value.

Sugar is also found naturally in fruits, veggies and dairy foods that are rich in healthy vitamins and minerals. But added sugars are often found in foods that are high in fat. Eating too much added sugar can lead to weight gain, increased triglycerides, cavities and other health problems.

The American Heart Association advises no added sugar for children under the age of 2, no more than 6 teaspoons (25 grams) for women and kids older than 2, and no more than 9 teaspoons (36 grams) for most men daily.

How can you know how much added sugar is in your food? The Nutrition Facts on packaging labels shows how many grams of all sugars are found in a single serving. Check the ingredient list for processed sugars ending in -ose. If you see them near the top of the list, you know the item probably has lots of added sugar.

Read on to learn where sugar may be hiding even in healthy foods and get ideas for alternatives.

[Get Simple Swaps for Sugar](#)

## Carrot-Apple Muffins (No Added Sugar)

These yummy muffins are sweetened only with fruit. Banana, apple and carrot provide sweetness and moistness. Munch on one for a quick breakfast or as a healthy snack.

### [Get the recipe](#)

#### Ingredients:

2 tbsp. coconut oil  
1 ripe banana, mashed  
1 apple, grated  
1 packed cup grated carrot  
1/3 cup apple puree  
1/2 cup milk  
2 eggs, beaten  
1 1/2 cups spelt flour  
1/2 cup ground almonds  
1 tsp. ground cinnamon  
1/2 tsp. powdered ginger  
1 1/2 tsp. baking soda  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/4 cup chopped walnuts (optional)



#### Directions:

Preheat oven to 375° and prepare muffin tin with liners. Melt coconut oil and add to the mashed banana, stirring to combine. Add the apple puree, grated apple and carrot, eggs and milk, stirring to combine. Mix the flour, ground almonds, cinnamon, ginger, baking soda and salt together. Combine the wet and dry ingredients and stir. Fill each muffin case to the top and sprinkle with the chopped walnuts. Bake for approximately 35 minutes or until golden brown and a knife inserted comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes.

#### *Nutrition info per serving*

177 calories | 9g fat | 19g carbohydrates | 5g protein | 5g sugar

Source: [healthylittlefoodies.com](http://healthylittlefoodies.com)

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## Eating well for a healthy mouth

While most people know that healthy food fuels a healthy body, they may not think about nutrition that benefits their teeth and gums.

Certainly, you've heard some basic rules – sugar is bad, calcium is good – but you may not be aware of hidden problems lurking in seemingly innocent options like bottled water. What you eat and drink can affect your oral health in both good and bad ways, and some choices are better than others.

### [Explore good \(and not-so-good\) diet choices](#)

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## Here comes the sun

Daylight savings time is almost here! Get ready to set the clock forward and look forward to longer days, hopefully filled with sunshine. While you're soaking up the rays (don't forget the sunscreen!), you're also getting a healthy dose of vitamin D.

Known as the sunshine vitamin, vitamin D may protect against diseases including osteoporosis, heart disease and cancers of the breast, prostate and colon.[6] Additional healthy benefits include protecting against depression, insomnia and an overactive immune system.[6]

According to the American Dental Association, vitamin D plays an important role in keeping your teeth healthy, too. It's needed to help your body absorb calcium and carry it to the bones that support your teeth. You can't get all the vitamin D your body needs from sunshine, so look for it in salmon, tuna, milk and other nutritious foods.

[Find the best vitamin D-rich foods](#)

[Lea en Español](#)

[1] Understanding the Results; [Healthy Sleep](#); February 2011.

[2] Epidemiology of Obstructive Sleep Apnea; Am J Resp Crit Care; 2002;165:1217-1239.

[3] Prevalence of probable obstructive sleep apnea risk and severity in a population of dental patients; Sleep Breath; 2008;12:303-309

[4] Obstructive sleep apnea; [mayoclinic.org](#); 2020.

[5] Sleep disorders and oral health: a cross-sectional study; [Clinical Oral Investigations](#); 2017.

[6] How much time in the sun do you need for Vitamin D; [U.S. News & World Report](#); 2018.

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