

# Valentine's Day Tips



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Valentine's Day is here! Before you make reservations for a romantic dinner or any other event involving food, we at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#) are here to make sure that you are not accidentally confronted by bad breath during a particularly awkward moment!

Check out our list of typical bad breath foods/drinks to avoid before celebrating Valentine's Day with your special someone!

## **The Usual Bad Breath Suspects**

It should be obvious that these noxious offenders can be causes of bad breath, but the importance of not going for that magical kiss after a giant mouthful a garlic-heavy dish cannot be overstated. Make sure that particularly odiferous foods and drinks, including garlic, onions, tuna, other kinds of fish, red meats, and even coffee are not consumed prior to any romantic activities without brushing first!

## **Odiferous Beverages**

Can Make You Dehydrated Not only can odiferous beverages like coffee and alcohol cause beverages, but they can even make you

dehydrated if you're not careful. Even the caffeine from energy drinks can be dehydrating. Saliva acts as a natural defense to bad breath, so if you become dehydrated your saliva production decreases and food particles remain in your mouth longer and can lead to bad breath.

### **Yes, Dairy and Even Candy Can Be Smelly**

Stinky cheeses are a given, but milk and other dairy products that are high in proteins feed the bacteria living in our mouths. The waste products of those bacteria can produce some unpleasant byproducts that result in bad breath. And yes, candy can be smelly, even on Valentine's Day. The sugar in candy and the bacteria in the mouth can produce a smelly sulfur compound, the longer sticky candy hangs out on your teeth and in your mouth.

### **How Do I Make My Breath Smell Good?**

Brushing is the safest bet, preferably with minty toothpaste for a fresh feeling, smell, and taste. But other methods include avoiding smelly foods and beverages, eat fruits and vegetables, drink 48 ounces of water a day, and clean your tongue with a tongue scraper.

Need more tips on how to avoid bad breath for Valentine's Day or any other day of the year? We at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#) are here to help!

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## **Ways to Encourage Good Brushing Habits in Children**

When you were a child, did your parents have to constantly

remind you to brush your teeth? If you were anything like 99.9% of kids, then the answer is likely to be a resounding yes. As a child, you didn't have any understanding of why brushing was important. However, as a parent, now you are constantly reminding your children to brush their teeth and trying to ensure they do it properly. If you find this task difficult, then check out these helpful tips to encourage good brushing habits in your children!

### **Use a Timer**

In order to tell your kids how to brush their teeth properly, you may not have an accurate frame of reference as to what "properly" means. Kids may be tempted to scrape across their teeth for 20 seconds and say that they're done. However, if you use a timer, then you're setting a very clear expectation as to what is considered proper brushing. A countdown timer propped on a bathroom shelf is all it takes; set it for two minutes and watch over your kids to ensure they brush for the duration. Over time, brushing thoroughly will become habit for them and you can phase out the use of the timer if you choose.

### **Brush After Every Meal**

One of the best ways to encourage good brushing habits in your kids is to practice good brushing habits for yourself. After your evening meal, make a point of brushing your teeth and encouraging your kids to do the same. When they see that you're abiding by these habits, they're more likely to see the habit as necessary and adapt it into their own behavior. You should leave at least an hour after eating before brushing, as certain foods can loosen the enamel on the surface of your teeth. Set yourself a reminder on your cellphone so that you don't forget to brush when the time is right.

### **Reward Positive Behavior**

Children respond well to positive reinforcement, such as receiving an award for doing something well. The best way to

do this for brushing teeth is with a weekly rewards system. Use a sheet of paper and draw a grid on it, with one section for each day of the week. When your child successfully brushes their teeth as they should on each day, they get a gold star. Seven gold stars in a week equals a small reward, which can be of your choosing. Eventually, they will come to associate regular, correct brushing with positive things, setting themselves up for a life of excellent oral hygiene.

The ideas above will help you to encourage your children to brush their teeth in the correct manner every single day, thus making your job as a parent a little bit easier. Good luck!

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## **The Benefit of Dental Sealants**

We only get one set of adult teeth so it's vital to keep them as healthy as possible for as long as we can. Brushing and flossing multiple times a day after meals are the first steps to sparkling oral health, but those tasks aren't always practical nor are they guaranteed to prevent oral decay.

We lead busy lives that often result in forgetting about our important dental responsibilities, or, in the case of children, getting them to learn how to brush their teeth properly is often very hard or impossible. There are also medical conditions and medications that can play a role in the acceleration of tooth decay. Additionally, the bristles on toothbrushes can only penetrate certain areas of your teeth, often missing the bacteria, food remnants, and plaque in the grooves which will result in cavities over time.

This is where dental sealant plays a key role in maintaining

the health of your teeth, by acting as a barrier between your tooth enamel and eroding bacteria, preventing decay from developing in these vulnerable areas. It's not a replacement to brushing or flossing, but it helps to prevent and delay the onset of tooth decay and cavities in children and adults.

You might be wondering what dental sealant is and how it's applied to the teeth, and those are some good questions. The sealant is a liquid that's applied to the entire visible tooth and then cured under a special light, resulting in a plastic-like coating that lasts for several years. It is commonly applied to premolars and molars, which are the teeth where decay occurs the most since these teeth are toward the back of our mouth and are used primarily for chewing.

Although having dental sealant applied is painless and quick, for many folks it helps to understand the exact process before having it done to alleviate any fears or worries. Here's the common process that most dentists follow when applying dental sealants:

**Clean:** The tooth's surface is cleaned thoroughly and then rinsed and dried, just like a normal tooth cleaning.

**Prime:** A special material that works to roughen or "etch" the surface of the tooth is applied briefly for 10 – 15 seconds. This will help the sealant adhere to the tooth.

**Rinse & Dry:** After the tooth has been primed for 10 – 15 seconds, the dentist thoroughly rinses the tooth surface with water and then dries the tooth again so the sealant can adhere.

**Seal & Cure:** Once the surface of the tooth is dried, the sealant is applied to the tooth and a curing light is used for a few seconds to harden the sealant into a plastic-like coating.

**Assess the bite:** After the sealant is applied, the dentist

will have you bite down several times to make sure that there is not a build-up of sealant interfering with your natural bite. If all is correct then the process is complete!

According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, dental sealants cut down on cavities by 86% in the first year and 58% after four years, with these statistics extending respectively to adults as well. In almost every case, applying dental sealants as early as possible will cost less than pursuing time-consuming and painful corrective treatment later on for cavities or decayed teeth.

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## **A Good Smile Can Make You More Confident**

Confidence can be a minefield for some of us.

If you're too confident in yourself, then this can manifest as arrogance. This means that other people may find you difficult to be around, and you can suffer through mistakes that are directly attributable to your overconfident nature.

The above, however, is a problem that few people have to deal with. For the vast majority of us, confidence problems stem from too little confidence, not too much. We all have reasons for lacking in confidence, hang ups and issues we don't particularly like about ourselves; suffering from low self-confidence can sap your ability to believe in yourself. If you suffer from this issue, then fighting back and trying to improve your confidence is essential.

At Charlotte Dentistry, we have noticed a tendency among our patients, and it's all to do with their confidence. When they

first come to us with issues relating to their smile – such as damaged gums or other aesthetic issues– they tend to carry themselves low to the ground. Their shoulders hunch, and if they smile, they cover their mouths or glance to the side. From observing patients over the years, we've developed an ability to spot confidence issues a mile away.

However, we've also seen how confidence can improve when those teeth problems are fixed. Many patients sit in front of the mirror, their smiles wide, studying their teeth with a look of sheer delight on their faces. When they leave, they are walking taller.

We know why this is, too. When you're lacking in confidence, particularly in regards to a part of your body, the issue is magnified to you. If you know that your teeth aren't in the best condition, then you are hyperaware of every smile, every time you open your mouth. You think that everyone is looking at you; judging your teeth; and subsequently judging you.

This focus is likely to all be in your mind, and most people you interact with won't see the problems that you find so obvious. That, however, is irrelevant; you worry, and you have to live in your own mind, so telling yourself that others don't notice just won't work. You have to do what you feel necessary to smile without concern, to make facial expressions, and to just be yourself without worrying someone is judging the way your teeth look.

Self-confidence is a universal problem; it can impact anyone, of any age, at any time. Some of these issues are chronic, but others are directly related to a physical attribute, and no amount of 'empowerment' is going to allow your mind to move on from your issue with that physical attribute. The best solution? Simple: if it's possible to fix it, then do so.

We have seen the consequences of this decision in our patients. Over the next few years, we see how they lose the

habits of covering their mouth or shielding their face while speaking. Their hang-up isn't there anymore and, over time, their confidence improves greatly. If you are suffering with any self-confidence issues regarding your teeth, then we're sure we could do the same for you.

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# 10 Things To Do Now For a Better Tomorrow

## 1. Take care of yourself and create good health habits:

Drink plenty of water, eat a well-balanced diet, exercise, don't smoke, and get plenty of sleep.

## 2. Keep your mind active:

Read every day, do crossword puzzles, join a study or book club, or write in a journal.

## 3. Count your blessings:

Gratitude is a key to happiness. Always be grateful for what you have, no matter how bad things might seem, there's always something to be thankful for.

## 4. Believe in you:

If you don't believe in yourself, don't believe that you are worthy; chances are that nobody else will. People will treat

you based on what you think about yourself.

### **5. Always look forward:**

The path that you have been following may be good or bad, either way, looking back and trying to change what has already happened is a waste of energy. Learn from the past don't re-live it.

### **6. Invest in your future:**

Money doesn't buy happiness, BUT it does give you peace of mind. Start saving money even if its just a small amount each paycheck. Before you know it, it becomes a habit and it will pay off in your future.

### **7. Nurture healthy loving relationships:**

Make your marriage your number one priority after God. Make time for each other, never go to bed mad.

### **8. Collect memories:**

Sometimes we get so focused on the big dreams, we forget to enjoy the journey. Life is all about the journey and less about the destination.

### **9. Look for ways to help others every day:**

Even the smallest gesture of kindness can make a difference in someone's day. Hold the door for someone. Help your neighbor if they need assistance. Find ways to help others.

## **10. Take care of your teeth:**

I know that we are a Charlotte Dentistry and that it is expected from us to say this. But it's true! If you want to keep your natural teeth for a lifetime, brush 2 times a day for 2 minutes each time. Have regular dental check-ups and here is the best tip ever -FLOSSING makes a world of difference. Your hygienist, your dentist, and your future self will thank you.

## **Food for thought:**

Something's are never worth it:

Holding grudges, buying extended warranties, super-sizing your meal, and never, ever sign up to get a free gift for listening to a timeshare presentation.

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# **Tulips Helped Them Survive**

During the final months of World War II in Europe, a Nazi blockade stopped all waterway food shipments into the major cities in the west of the Netherlands. The consequences were devastating, as many who lived through that period can testify.

A person normally needs about 1,600 to 2,800 calories a day. But by April 1945, some of those living in Amsterdam, Delft, The Hague, Leiden, Rotterdam, and Utrecht were subsisting on daily rations that amounted to between 500 and 600 calories a day. It is believed that as a result, during the Hunger Winter

of 1944/45, at least 10,000 civilians died from malnutrition.

According to survivor Susan Monkman, her family resorted to eating tulip bulbs. “The tulip bulbs were unbelievably sharp-edged,” says Monkman. “No amount of simmering would soften them. Nevertheless we were happy to chew them slowly and carefully. They left us with sore throats for days.” To help reduce the irritation, a few carrots or a sugar beet, if available, would be mixed with the bulbs.

One four-ounce portion of tulip bulbs contains some 148 calories, 3 grams of protein, 0.2 grams of fat, and 32 grams of carbohydrate. Thus, the unpalatable diet of tulip bulbs may have helped save many Netherlanders from starvation.

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## **How Oral Health Affects the Rest of You**

“Show me your teeth, and I will tell you who you are,” declared preeminent 18th-century naturalist George Cuvier. The guy was onto something.

During the past few years, periodontal researchers and physicians have amassed a trove of evidence showing that not only can the gums and teeth act as a barometer for how well the body is doing; they may directly affect the health of the heart, metabolism, brain, and even penis.

Hyperbole? OK, maybe. But look at the facts: The mouth is the body’s most common entry point for infection, yet doctors have almost universally ignored it, says Wenche S. Borgnakke, a University of Michigan periodontal health researcher and a dentist who for decades has urged M.D.’s to take the health of

the mouth more seriously. “Almost every medical condition has some kind of manifestation in the mouth,” she says. “Yet until two or three years ago, medical schools basically taught that the body began at the tonsils.” It’s a sentiment echoed by Harvard endocrinologist William Hsu, another of the new breed of oral health investigators: “I call the mouth the ‘black hole’ of the body because it’s a mystery to most medical folks.”

For anyone who needs a refresher, here’s why oral health is so crucial: Every time you eat, food particles stick to your teeth. If you don’t brush and floss daily, the particles attract bacteria and form a slimy coating on teeth: plaque. With less than a week of inattention, that plaque calcifies into hard tartar, which won’t come off without a dentist’s scraping tool, and begins to lodge in the supporting gum structure. The gums become inflamed – that’s gingivitis, the first stage of periodontal disease, or PD – and little pockets open up between the teeth and the gums.

The collateral damage from neglecting your teeth and gums stacks up fast: Heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and possibly erectile dysfunction and Alzheimer’s can all be connected to an unhealthy mouth.

In the case of heart disease, the oral bacterium triggers the release of inflammatory molecules called cytokines, which interfere with the ability of the heart vessels to relax and contract. (Pretty much the same thing happens in vessels in the brain and can result in a stroke.) Last year, a study published in *Circulation* found that patients with periodontal disease were 30 percent more likely to suffer a first heart attack than patients with a clean bill of health – and that’s after accounting for factors like smoking and education.

Here’s how we know that it’s the bacteria from the mouth causing problems: After coronary bypasses, researchers dissected clogged arteries removed from patients, and they

found oral bacteria, Borgnakke says. Probably the best evidence that these bugs are up to no good comes from studies in which people have had the health of their mouths restored with nonsurgical periodontal therapy – the vigorous scraping away of plaque on the teeth and underneath the gumline that we get when we visit the dentist.

A raft of studies show that if you've got gum disease, you're more likely to have or develop diabetes; the worse the gums, likely the worse the diabetes. In a small study last year, a British team tracked Alzheimer's patients over six months and found that the group with gum disease suffered cognitive decline at six times the rate of the group without.

At the University of Michigan, preventive cardiologist Melvyn Rubenfire asks each of his patients whether they keep up with dental evaluations, and his patients getting valve or congenital heart operations have an exam and necessary periodontal therapy before surgery to minimize the chance of infection-related complications. Meanwhile, Hsu continues to push for new guidelines from the American Diabetes Association, urging that, if you've been diagnosed with diabetes, you should go to the dentist to treat any gum infection or inflammation. "When I see an unexplained rise in blood glucose in a patient," he says, "I'll ask, 'When is the last time you had a dental cleaning?'" Hsu and Genco even teamed up for a study in which they asked dentists to test the blood sugar of patients with periodontal disease to catch diabetes early among patients.

Take this 2014 study in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*: Researchers looked at the dental and medical insurance records of several hundred thousand people who had, among other conditions, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. If they'd had at least one routine teeth scraping, their medical costs, and their likelihood of being hospitalized dropped.

At a more philosophical level, Borgnakke argues, we need to start thinking of the mouth as an ecosystem of bacteria that can drive health and sickness, similar to how we now view the gut. “When the balance in the community of bacteria gets skewed, nasty bugs take over,” Borgnakke says. That can happen when you neglect good brushing and regular flossing – or your diet. In the mouth, saliva breaks down sweets and even starches into sugar, this coats your teeth and feeds toxic mouth germs. If the bacteria seep into the gums and then the bloodstream, Borgnakke dubs them “the Traveling Oral Microbiome.” Exactly where they land, fester, and drive up the risk of disease – be it the heart, brain, or penis – is a question of individual vulnerability or the location of your particular Achilles’ heel.

Pass that floss.

Source: [How Oral Health Affects the Rest of You – Men’s Journal](#)

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## **October is National Dental Hygiene Month!**

**October is National Dental Hygiene Month!** It’s a perfect opportunity to thank our team of amazing hygienists who work diligently with our patients to increase awareness about the importance of maintaining good dental health. Good oral hygiene not only helps in developing strong teeth and healthy gums, but it also boosts your confidence as well as helps in maintaining your overall health. It is vital to understand the necessity of excellent dental hygiene and our team is ready to

help teach each patient the proper techniques to maintain optimum dental health throughout every stage of life.

But our hygienists don't just clean teeth and remind you to brush and floss daily. They're on the dental front lines. They look for problems like tooth decay, periodontal disease, they check for oral cancer, and are trained to spot dental problems before they become serious. Our hygiene team works closely with our dentists, communicating any concerns. They also help formulate a treatment plan that is best for each individual patient. If your home care routine of brushing and flossing has slipped and it's been awhile since your last regular dental cleaning, it's never too late! **Give us a call at Charlotte Dentistry where our patients come first.**

At Charlotte Dentistry, we're blessed with the best dental hygienists-hands down. Their dedication and commitment to our patients is truly second to none. Our patients are not the only ones who benefit from our hygiene team, they are some of the most entertaining, creative and caring group of co-workers we have the pleasure to work with!

**Give us a call at Charlotte Dentistry at 704-376-6470 today!**

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## **Teeth Shifting After Braces: Is it Normal?**

Getting orthodontic work done is one of the best things you can do for your smile. This corrective work will restore your natural bite, correct any crooked or crowded teeth, and leave you with a gorgeous smile that you can be proud of for life. It's important to be prepared for what will happen once your treatment is complete and the braces/Invisalign are off. Your

orthodontic provider may have talked to you already about wearing a retainer to keep your teeth straight. Will your teeth shift after orthodontic treatment? Here's how you can know what's normal and what's not.

## **Shifting Will Happen**

Shifting is a normal part of the process when your orthodontic work is completed. Your teeth have been held firmly into place by the braces/Invisalign for some time now, so the removal of these sturdy brackets and wires will lead to a bit of shifting. Your teeth will be settling into their positions now that the braces are gone, and this is just what should happen. During this time, it's absolutely essential that you wear your retainer. This will prevent too much shifting and keep the teeth in their correct position while the settling process is happening.

## **Wear Your Retainer**

Your retainer was specially fitted for your unique mouth. The retainer is a crucial part of your treatment, and perhaps the most important—it will keep your newly adjusted smile looking just as it did when the brace or Invisalign aligners were on. The retainer will help keep your teeth in place to prevent any abnormal shifting. Your orthodontic provider may have informed you that you'll need to wear your retainer every night for the rest of your life. This is because teeth can shift naturally over time, and you'll need your retainer as a gentle reminder to tell your teeth where they belong.

## What to Look Out For

If you neglect to wear your retainer even for a few nights—especially soon after your braces come off—your teeth could shift to the point that the retainer no longer fits. At this point, you'll need to go back to your orthodontic provider to see if he or she can fit your mouth with another retainer or if you need additional treatment.

Your retainer should be comfortable and fit your mouth appropriately. Your orthodontic provider should check that it fits well before you leave the office with your new smile. If for any reason your retainer doesn't fit well or feel right, talk to your orthodontic provider about getting an adjustment.

If you're having major shifting after your orthodontic treatment is completed, this isn't normal and is a cause for concern. Your orthodontic provider can help you figure out what's going on and correct the problem. Your teeth will naturally settle with the help of your retainer, but always be sure to look out for abnormal shifting or problems with your retainer if you're wearing as prescribed.

Keeping your teeth beautiful and straight after the braces come off is easy when you follow your orthodontic provider's instructions. Teeth shifting after braces/Invisalign is normal, but the shifting should be minor and you should still be able to comfortably wear your retainer. Talk to your orthodontic provider if you're having any issues—don't wait!

Source: [Teeth Shifting After Braces: Is it Normal? – Your Dental Health Resource](#)

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# Fall is Almost Here!

For as long as I can remember it has been one of my top 4 seasons (I love them all). My family may say it's because my birthday is in October. While that may be part of it, there are so many other reasons to fall in love with Fall. I look forward to that first morning when I walk outside and the air is cool and crisp and the sun's shadows are casted differently. This is a sure sign that the seasons are changing. It's all so magical!

Every year our family tradition is to bundle up and take a day trip to Blowing Rock, NC during peak leaf-viewing season. Without fail, my husband will say over and over "This is so beautiful; it looks just like a tapestry." After the first 50 times he says this, the kids will ask, "Dad do you think it looks like a tapestry?" (Smart-aleck kids! Who do they take after?) However, Dad is always right, the canopy of reds, golds, and orange is truly breath taking.

Fall fills me full of excitement. I can't wait for my first pumpkin spice latte, pumpkin bread, pumpkin pie, pumpkin cake, pumpkin waffles, pumpkin doughnuts, pumpkin roll, pumpkin dip, toasted pumpkin seeds, and let's not forget...pumpkin carving! (That kind of reminded me of Forest Gump- remember? Fried shrimp, boiled shrimp, peeled shrimp, etc).

## **Some of my other favorite Fall things:**

- Spiced cider and hot chocolate
- S'mores
- Jumping into piles of leaves
- Hay rides
- Fall Festivals
- Halloween
- Thanksgiving
- Apple picking (caramel apples are even better)

- Panthers football
- Comfy sweaters and fuzzy slippers.
- North Carolina's State Fair
- Cuddling up with a special someone in front of a roaring fire

Every season has its unique beauty; however, Autumn lovers relish in Falls' ability to turn the world into one big giant canvas. Kind of like...a tapestry.