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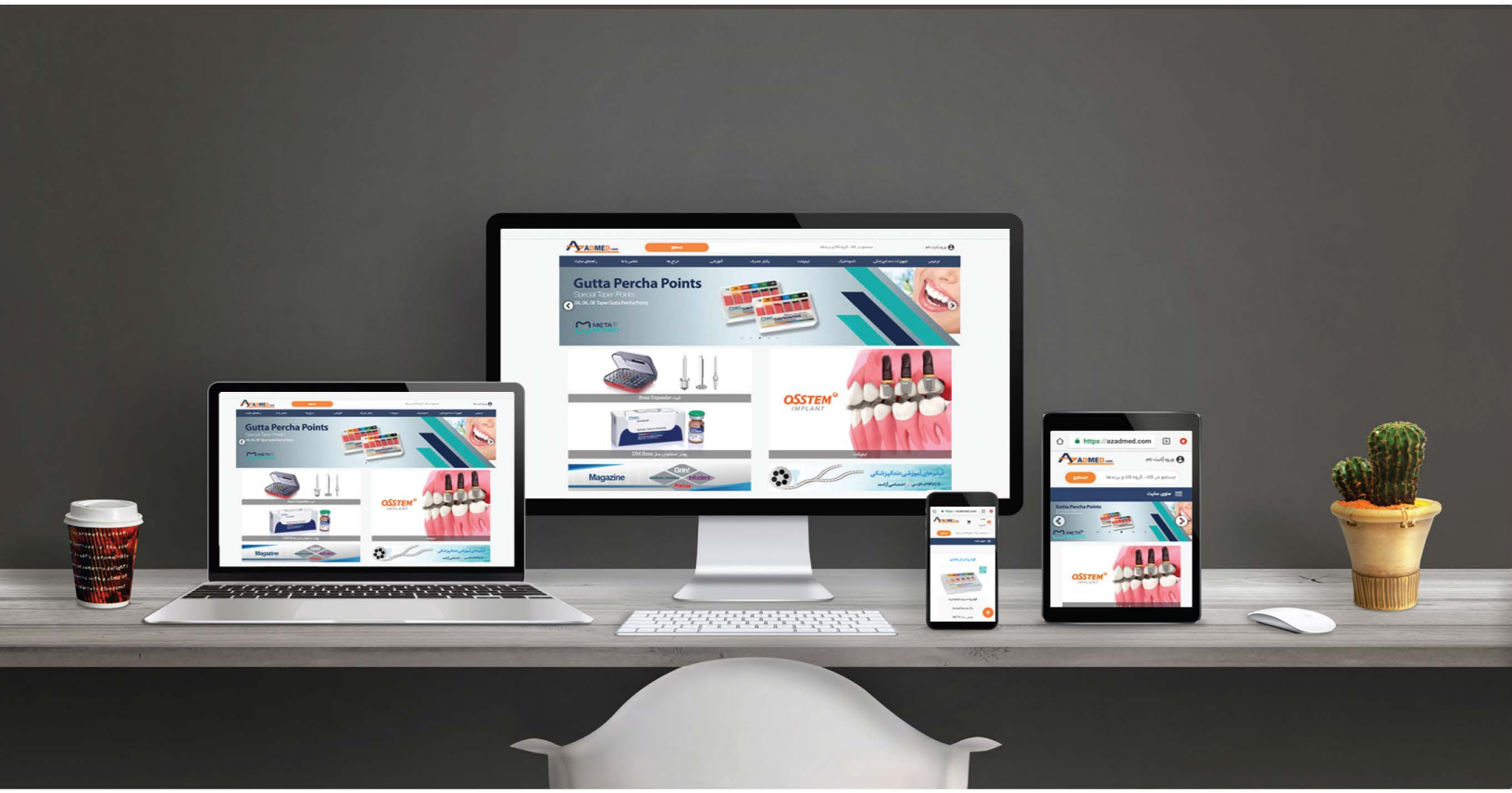

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DELTA DENTAL®

CELEBRATING THE POWER OF A HEALTHY SMILE

grin!®

How to make flossing part of your routine

Hydrating for a healthy smile

5 exercises to do while brushing your teeth

When to get dental coverage for your baby

AZADMED.com

spring 2019

in this issue of

grin!®

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How to make flossing part of your routine

Flossing every day can help you keep a healthy smile. Follow our easy tips for making it a habit.

Hydrating for a healthy smile

Water is more than just refreshing. See how it can improve your oral health by strengthening your enamel, preventing tooth decay and more.

When to get dental coverage for your baby

First cavities can arrive as early as first teeth. How long is too long before taking your child to the dentist? Learn the surprising answer.

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WELLNESS

Eat right during pregnancy for your baby's oral health

What you eat during pregnancy can help with proper development of your baby's teeth. Read about which nutrients are especially important.

LIFESTYLE

Taking care of your baby's teeth

Healthy baby teeth are the building blocks for healthy permanent teeth. Learn how to take care of your baby's oral health even before that first tooth arrives.

Access the digital version anytime, anywhere at **grinmag.com.** ■

History of oral health: Teeth embellishments

Those looking for a little extra bling may turn to their teeth. **Despite cosmetic dentistry having a long history from around the world, we recommend steering clear of such embellishments to avoid painful and costly complications.**

1800 B.C. to A.D. 250

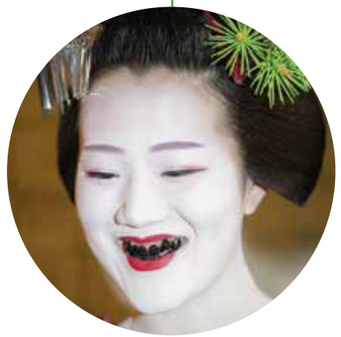
Possibly the most skilled early teeth embellishment came from Mayan dentists, who drilled holes in teeth and added gems such as jade, turquoise, gold and hematite. These jewels were attached with adhesives such as plant sap.

1178

The earliest written record of cosmetic dentistry stems from China, where records describe "a fierce tribe with gold-pegged teeth." Such stained or decorated teeth were considered a mark of beauty.

250 to 1870

Japanese dyed their teeth black in a practice called "ohaguro" that signified health, beauty and aristocratic status. The custom became popular from the 8th to 12th century but was banned by the Meiji government in 1870.



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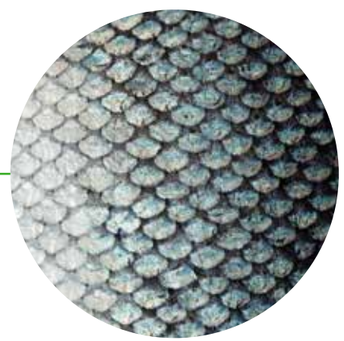
1401 to 1500

Researchers discovered skulls from the Ming Dynasty that had teeth modified with gold in a fish scale pattern.



Today

Options to embellish teeth include tooth tattoos, tooth jewelry and grills. ■

On topic with Dr. Dill

How decorating your mouth can hurt your smile

Your teeth, gums and oral tissue are designed by nature. They are perfectly suited for you as they are. So while it may be tempting to try embellishments such as tooth tattoos, tooth jewelry or grills, these changes can upset the natural balance of your mouth.

Here are just a few of the ways you could damage your smile by piercing your lip or tongue, drilling unnecessary holes in your teeth or adding a dental grill:

- Chipping or breaking your teeth
- Cracking your crowns
- Making deep cuts in the soft tissue of your gums and mouth
- Creating traps for bacteria
- Increasing the chance of infection

While you may be tempted to decorate your teeth, this possible damage, along with the potential for gum disease and bad breath, means it's just not worth it.

It's true that ancient populations did a lot of dying and drilling of their teeth as a symbol of beauty and status. But dental science has come a long way since then. Today, we're able to avoid a lot of the oral health problems people had in years past.

So don't mess with nature. Skip the teeth embellishments and avoid unnecessary pain, complications and cost. ■

Meet Delta Dental's Vice President of Dental Science and Network Strategy, Joseph Dill, DDS. With over 30 years of experience in the dental field, including eight in private practice and 16 in dental insurance, Dr. Dill provides expert insights and helpful advice to keep you smiling bright.

Mouth-friendly recipe:
Blackberry-mint infused water

Drinking water is one of the best things you can do for your body and teeth. Infusing fruit can enhance the flavor of your beverage, without adding sugar or calories. This blackberry-mint infused water provides a refreshing and healthy beverage that will keep you hydrated this spring.

Ingredients:
A handful of blackberries
4 to 5 mint leaves
Water

Directions:
1. Lightly mash a handful of blackberries, releasing their juices into a pitcher.
2. Rub the mint leaves in your hands to release their oils and place them in the same pitcher.
3. Add water and infuse for at least two hours, or overnight for full flavor.
4. Adjust the amount of blackberries and mint to taste.
5. Enjoy! ■

Mint
has health benefits that range from improving brain function and digestive symptoms to relieving bad breath.

Blackberries
are packed with antioxidants that protect the body and have antibacterial properties that can kill bacteria in your mouth.

Readers ask, we answer

Bryan asks:
"Why does my mouth feel dry before a presentation?"

Have a question you'd like us to answer? Send it to grin@deltadental.com, and it could be featured in an upcoming issue.

Hi, Bryan! It's common to experience dry mouth when you're nervous or anxious.

This is a natural result of the body's fight-or-flight survival response to distressing situations — in this case, making a presentation in front of a group of people. Stress hormones produce physiological changes that can also include a pounding heart, quickened breath, tense muscles and beads of sweat.

But dry mouth does more than cause discomfort and make it difficult to speak or swallow. Chronic dry mouth can also increase the likelihood of cavities, gum disease, oral infections and bad breath.

Here are some tips to prevent dry mouth the next time you give a presentation:

- Bring a water bottle with you to the podium.
- Before your speech, chew sugar-free gum to stimulate saliva flow.
- Avoid tobacco, caffeine, acidic drinks and alcohol, which can worsen dry mouth.
- Reduce anxiety before your next presentation by taking deep breaths, practicing your speech and preparing the room to make sure everything is set up correctly.
- Drink decaffeinated herbal tea or warm water to help calm your nerves. ■

How to make flossing part of your routine

Flossing your teeth at least once a day helps clean plaque from hard-to-reach places between teeth and under the gumline — lowering your risk of cavities and keeping gum disease at bay. Consider these tips for how to add flossing to your routine.

GETTING STARTED

1

Choose the type of floss that works best for you — such as waxed or unwaxed, mint-flavored, dental tape or pre-threaded flossers. It's important to learn the proper way to floss.

2

For traditional floss, just pull 18 to 24 inches of dental floss from the dispenser and wrap the ends of the floss around your middle fingers on each hand. Then use your index finger and thumb to guide the floss between each tooth.

3

Hold the floss tightly around each tooth in a C shape, moving the floss back and forth against the sides of each tooth. ›

4 out of 10 Americans report flossing daily.[1]

[1]2014 Delta Dental Oral Health and Well-Being Survey

Continued from page 9

MAKE IT A HABIT

But how do you remember to do it? Try designating a trigger that consistently reminds you to floss. One way to do this is to pair it with existing parts of your routine such as after you brush, when you take your medication or before you go to bed. To keep flossing top of mind, try these tricks:

- Set reminders to floss on your phone or with notes placed in the bathroom.
- Leave your floss in sight instead of tucked away in a drawer.
- Store it right next to your toothbrush so you see it every time you brush.
- Add a bright eye-catching sticker to your floss container.

SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

The best way to maintain consistency is to plan for disruption. You may be pulled from your normal routine for a business trip or vacation. Keep travel floss on hand in convenient locations such as your car, briefcase or office, so you can still floss on the go.

REWARD YOURSELF

Set a goal and keep a daily log of your progress, then reward yourself with a fun activity or sugar-free treat for remembering to floss for a target amount of consecutive days. ■

[2]Academy of General Dentistry

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Two-word answers

Q:
Will there ever be a vaccine for cavities?

A:
It's possible.

Scientists worldwide have been working since the 1960s on a vaccine that could prevent cavities. While they have seen little success, one group of scientists in China are developing a potential vaccine that would be similar to a flu shot.

The vaccine would cause certain proteins to attach themselves to the cavity-causing bacteria Streptococcus mutans (S. mutans), making the bacteria less harmful to teeth. While the vaccine has showed some promise in early laboratory tests, it's not yet ready for consumers.

In the laboratory, tests at the Chinese Academy of Sciences showed the vaccine:

Reduced new cavities by

64.2%

Reversed (healed) decay in

53.9%

of teeth with existing decay prior to the vaccine

More research is needed before the vaccine becomes available for consumers. In the meantime, keeping up with good oral health habits — including brushing twice a day, flossing once a day and visiting the dentist regularly — will always be key to a healthy smile. Help prevent cavities by scheduling routine checkups and cleanings, which are usually completely covered by most dental plans. ■

HYDRATING
for a healthy smile

Aah, spring. As rain showers nourish the plants outside, making everything feel fresh and new, take a minute to learn what water can do for your oral health.

grin!

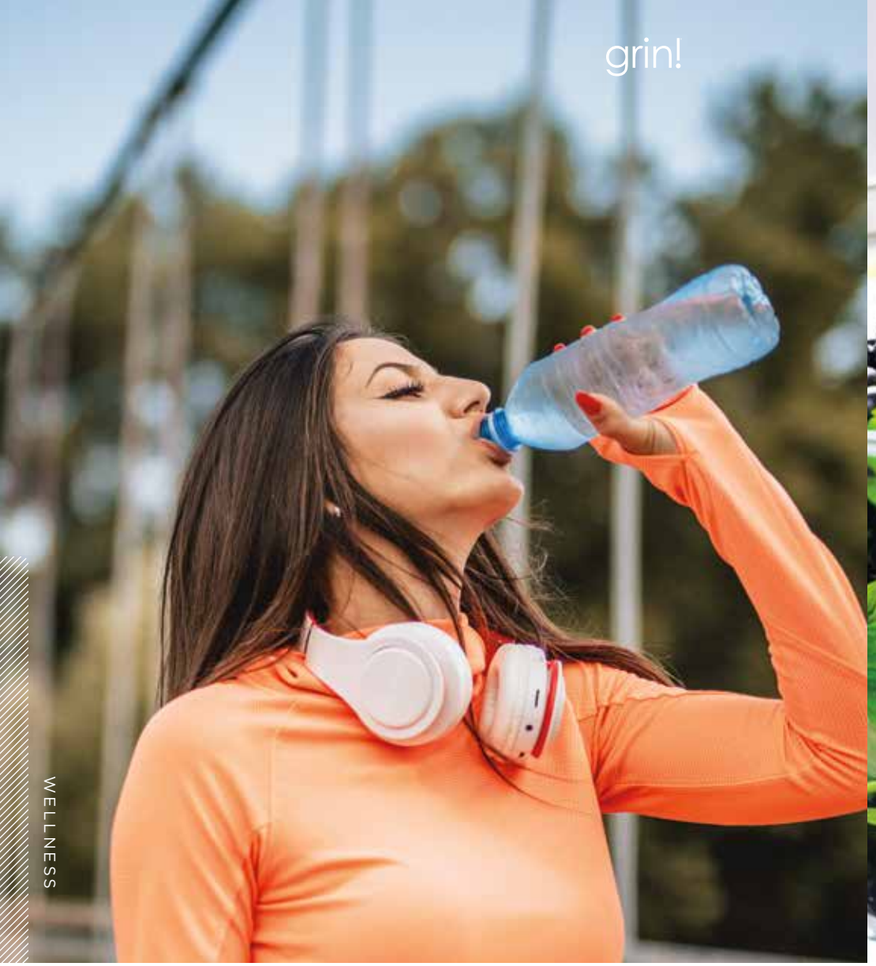
WELLNESS

Strengthens enamel

Water is one of the main ways we receive the amount of fluoride that we need. The fluoride often found in tap water strengthens enamel, the hard outer layer of your teeth, to help prevent cavities. When enamel has been weakened by exposure to acids in the mouth, fluoride rebuilds it through a process called “remineralization.” The addition of fluoride to many water supplies across America in the 1950s has led to a significant reduction in the number of cavities.

Washes away remnants

Drinking water after eating can help cleanse your palate, teeth and breath, especially when you can’t sneak away to brush. Food can leave behind remnants that stick to your teeth, producing acids that feed cavity-causing bacteria. This can eventually breakdown enamel, reaching the deeper layers of your teeth and causing decay. Water dilutes the levels of acid that rise when sugar is left on teeth and rinses off remnants before they have a chance to do damage. ›



Continued from page 13

Fights dry mouth

Dry mouth is not only uncomfortable but it also raises your risk of gum disease, cavities and mouth infections. Drinking water can help cut that risk.

Hydrates best

Water is simply the best way to hydrate. Unlike other drink options, it doesn't contain high levels of sugar or acids. Spruce up your glass of water by trying our delicious recipe for blackberry-mint infused water on page 6.

It has been said that water is the essence of life. Now that you know it's also essential for better oral health, make sure to stay properly hydrated. While the exact amount of water needed will vary by individual, you should aim to drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water each day. ■

Your spring smile list

1. Plant your favorite flowers in your backyard.
2. Go outside and breathe in the fresh scents of spring.
3. Do some spring cleaning for your smile. Toss out toothbrushes that are three or more months old.
4. Open your windows and listen to the birds chirping.
5. Get your heart rate up by taking a brisk walk or riding your bike.
6. Try a new workout for some extra spring in your step. For suggested exercises while you brush, see page 18.
7. Find your inner child by swinging at your neighborhood park.
8. Spend the day with your family at a petting zoo.
9. Sit outside with friends and sip on fruit-infused water. Check out our recipe on page 6.
10. Text a compliment to a friend or family member to make them smile. ■

Dental trend spotlight: Dental tourism

As the cost of health care continues to rise, thousands of Americans are traveling abroad to find a less expensive way to take care of their dental needs. Could you be one of them?

In 2017, more than 6 million people from around the world — including 800,000 Americans — crossed a border to get dental work done, according to Patients Beyond Borders. Some dental clinics abroad promote savings of up to 80 percent on root canals, dental implants, crowns and more.

People living close to an international border form the majority of those traveling for their dental needs. Residents of Arizona, California and Texas are crossing the border into Mexico for dental work, while those from the East Coast are traveling south to Costa Rica. Other popular dental destinations include Hungary, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Poland, Spain, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam.

Those considering traveling abroad for dental care should research the safety and quality of an overseas dentist before planning such a trip — including seeking reviews from previous patients. While U.S. dentists participating in a Delta Dental network go through a stringent credentialing process that ensures quality care, some overseas clinics are less reputable. In addition, dental tourism isn't for everyone. Such travel may not be best if you are prone to asthma attacks or if you are more susceptible to infection because of heart disease, kidney failure or a transplant.

Before planning a trip, check your dental coverage to see if services outside of the United States are covered and what documentation is needed. If something goes wrong after your dental procedure, you may have to either schedule a follow-up visit with your local dentist or plan another trip to fix the problem. Some U.S. dentists will not provide follow-up care on dental work done abroad, due to liability risks.

Our verdict: Keep your regular dentist informed of any dental work you plan to do, at home or abroad. If you choose to travel overseas for dental work, research the safety and quality of that dentist thoroughly. ■

grin!

When to get dental coverage for your baby

Before your little one begins giving you a toothy grin, put a plan in place to protect their smile.

Children can develop cavities as soon as their teeth erupt, starting around 6 months of age. Even before your children get their first teeth, you should begin wiping their gums with a damp cloth after meals. As soon as the first tooth is in, brushing should begin.

Many parents wait until their children are 2 years or older[1] before taking them to the dentist. But the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends scheduling that first visit soon after the first tooth appears and no later than your child's first birthday.

Early visits to the dentist are crucial for a healthy smile. They allow the dentist to monitor your baby's oral health and make sure your child does not have cavities.

During that first visit, the dentist will discuss how to properly care for your child's teeth and gums, provide tips for proper nutrition for a healthy smile and answer any questions you may have. The dentist will also check your baby's teeth, gums and bite to make sure everything is developing correctly.

Reach out to your human resources manager or check with your local benefits representative to find out when you can enroll your baby in dental coverage. Preventive care like dental checkups and cleanings are normally covered at 100 percent, so getting coverage before the first visit to the dentist is a great way to save money and protect your child's smile.

Find out more about taking care of your baby's smile at dentistby1.com. ■

[1]2009 Delta Dental Children's Oral Health Survey

5

exercises to do while brushing your teeth

If April showers bring May flowers, then spring workouts bring summer fitness, right? Get in shape and get in your full two minutes of brushing twice each day by doing these five easy exercises while you brush:

Quads

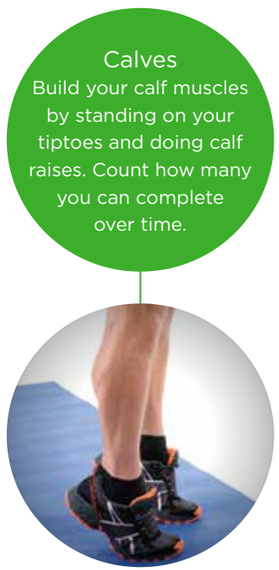
Try a wall sit, which works both your quads and your core. Challenge yourself to hold it for the full two minutes.

Lower Body

Walk around while you brush to get your daily steps in.

Calves

Build your calf muscles by standing on your tiptoes and doing calf raises. Count how many you can complete over time.



If you do try these exercises, make sure that you are still brushing your teeth properly. Continue to brush for the full two minutes with fluoride toothpaste twice a day, brush at a 45-degree angle and pay special attention to all surfaces of your teeth.

Abs

Sit on the bed, in a chair or on the ground while brushing. Keep your legs in front of you and your chest up. Lift and lower your legs, contracting your core. Bend or straighten your knees. Repeat.

Inner thighs

Place a small, inflatable ball or a rolled-up bath towel between your knees. Slowly squeeze your knees, contracting your inner thighs. Release slightly, keeping some tension on the ball or towel and repeat. Get in as many squeezes as you can in two minutes. ■

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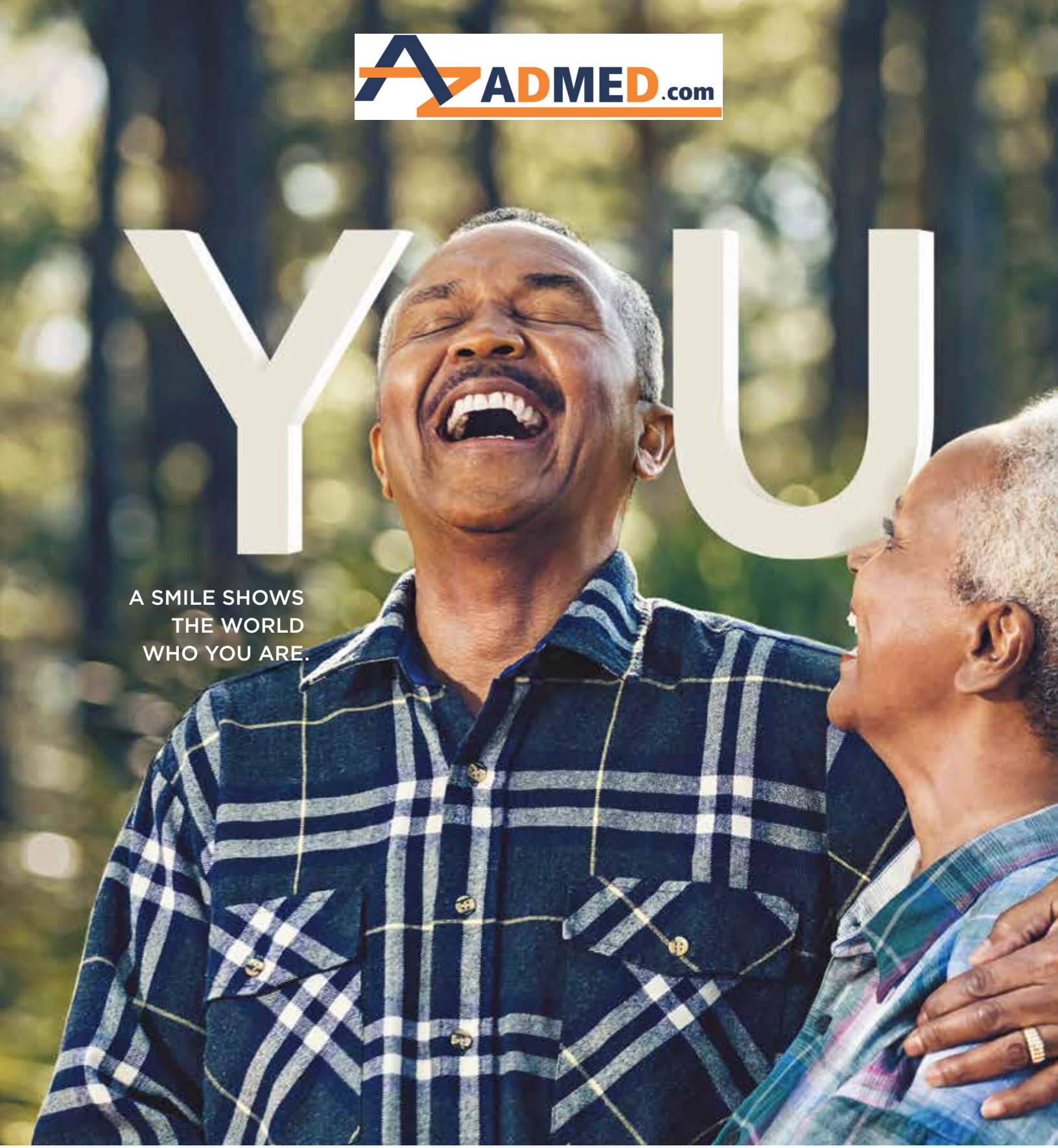

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