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Escape From the Snow

Snow season in Tahoe — landscapes of snow-covered pines and frosty lake shores belong in the winter section of a National Geographic calendar. There's no denying it's picturesque around here. But while we love winter's icy beauty, by the time February and March roll around, most of us are craving a little sun. When you're looking to escape the snow, what could be better than a trip to the tropical Hawaiian Islands and a little R&R? Which part of Hawaii is calling your name?

Sea, Sand, and Surf

It may be in the 30s and 40s around here, but in Hawaii, temperatures are still in the high 70s and 80s — perfect beach weather! Hawaii has some of the best beaches in the world, including the famous Waikiki. But Waikiki is only one of many, each with its own unique draw.

Kauna'oa Beach, for example, is the perfect beach for tranquility. It's always accessible to Westin Resorts guests, but only 25 others are allowed on the beach at a time.

Whether you surf the crystalline waters or just soak up some rays, the islands of Hawaii are home to a variety of unique shores where sand and sea meet.



Relax at the Spa

If your idea of a perfect vacation involves an 11 a.m. deep tissue massage followed by a mud facial, Hawaii still has you covered. The islands house some incredible pampering retreats including Kona's Four Seasons Hualalai Spa, where you can enjoy their exclusive lomi lomi massage, which utilizes a distinctive Hawaiian technique. Or check out the award-winning Travaasa Hana in Maui. It's the perfect place to relax in the sun away from Tahoe's icy chill.

Natural Wonders

Looking for something a little more inland? Escape to the 14-mile-long "Grand Canyon of the Pacific," Waimea Canyon, on Kauai, or hike Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park to discover some of the mountains that created these beautiful islands. Sound too tame? Amp up the daredevil factor with a helicopter tour or some island skydiving. Whichever island you choose to explore, you're sure to find an outdoor adventure.

SIERRA CREST DENTAL NEWSLETTER

530-562-4089
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WHEN DOES GRATITUDE

Bring Better Health?

Gratitude is one of those tricky, hard-to-pin-down feelings that can be powerfully transformative. We believe it has transformed our team.

Only in the past decade has there been a push to determine if gratitude "decreases pain and depression and boosts happiness," as a recent study in Primary Health Care Research & Development put it. The researchers found that an act of explicitly expressing gratitude lifted people's mood and sense of well-being. Bolstering this finding, other targeted studies have shown that health care workers who cataloged why they were grateful experienced a 28 percent reduction in stress. It also found that writing about gratitude halved the risk of depression in those with a history of the disease. Among fit teenage athletes, those with high levels of gratitude were more satisfied with life in general and with their teams in particular. Counting one's blessings, as opposed to life's annoyances, seems to bring with it all kinds of benefits: resilience, better health, a rosier outlook ... even a longer, more restful night's sleep and a sense of connectedness to other people.

Changing how we feel is one thing, but changing our behavior is another. It's not unbelievable that emotions could make you feel more optimistic about your life. Dr. McCullough, a psychology professor at the University of Miami who investigates emotions like forgiveness, revenge, and gratitude, wonders whether feeling grateful actually alters our health or motivates us to change our behavior — to quit smoking or drinking, for example. He found both mood and behavior changes in an experiment he did with Robert Emmons, a colleague at the University of California-Davis. In the study, the doctors prompted people to list five things they were grateful for, and to do this several times a week. What they found was that doing this not only brought an uptick in mood but also resulted in subjects devoting more time to exercise and to helping others. "Gratitude motivates people to try to give back," Dr. McCullough says, "and the research is really good that volunteering is good



for health. Emotional state to social contact to feeding back into health behavior — it all makes sense."

Whether the feeling or the behavior comes first, we do know that gratitude is tied to conscientiousness. Grateful people eat 25 percent fewer fatty foods and have better blood pressure readings than ungrateful folks. And a new, still unpublished study shows that feeling thankful is linked to lower hemoglobin A1c, a sign of good blood-glucose management and thus better diabetes control. In fact, gratitude is such a powerful catalyst for feeling healthy, it's a wonder that no one (except greeting card companies) has found a way to package it.

Here at Sierra Crest Dental, we are very grateful for all of our outstanding patients. We want you to feel our gratitude and allow us to continue to offer you the best service and care possible.

— Dr. Colpitts

BREAKING NEWS

Michael Colpitts, DC –
noted Chiropractor – is negotiating
for office space in Truckee.
Stay tuned!

Blood Pressure Matters

When your blood pressure is taken, they are checking one of the most important signs of your health. Having high blood pressure can lead to serious problems if not treated, including damage to the heart and arteries.

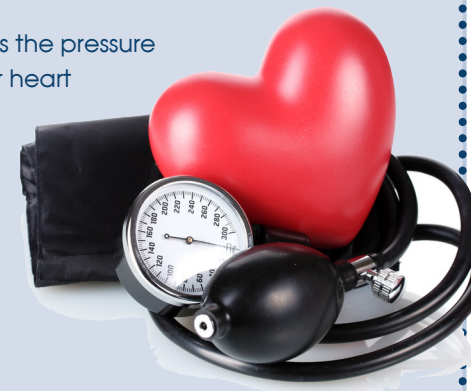
Many people have high blood pressure and don't know it. There are usually no symptoms. You may have heard that people with high blood pressure are nervous or feel tense. But that's not true. You can have high blood pressure and feel calm and relaxed.

That's why it's so important to have your blood pressure checked at least once a year. So if you

haven't had your blood pressure checked this year, ask your hygienist to check it for you.

120/80

The top number measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats. The bottom number measures the pressure in your arteries between heartbeats. The American Heart Association says 120/80 is "normal."



How Heart Health IS LINKED TO PERIODONTAL DISEASE

A recent study was published in the journal Infection and Immunity that further confirmed the link between periodontal disease and heart health. Many patients somehow disassociate their oral health from their overall health, but this is a problematic viewpoint, as the two are inextricably connected — which means you need to make sure your mouth is being taken care of! Here's the latest development.

A Swedish team of investigators at the Department of Clinical Medicine in the School of Health Science at Orebro University studied this phenomenon, and what they found is that periodontitis is linked to heart disease because of a specific pathogen called Porphyromonas gingivalis. This particular pathogen actually causes changes in gene expression, which boosts both inflammation and atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) in aortic smooth muscle cells.

In other words, the pathogen that's proliferated by periodontal disease has a direct impact on heart health! P. gingivalis has been found in the coronary artery plaque of heart attack patients, like a criminal hanging around

the scene of the crime. And in animal models, researchers have seen P. gingivalis cause and accelerate the formation of atherosclerosis in the heart.

As problematic as bad oral health is, it's important to realize that the mouth doesn't exist independently of the rest of the body. Allowing periodontal disease to go on untreated can lead to serious complications like heart disease that affect your overall health. According to the American Academy of Periodontology, people with periodontal disease are almost twice as likely to suffer from coronary artery disease compared to those without periodontitis.

So if you are suffering from receding or inflamed gums, it's a good idea to get the situation scoped out by your hygienist. While periodontal disease rarely causes pain and discomfort in the mouth, it has even more life-threatening effects to contend with if you're not careful — the longer you let the condition linger, the greater your risk of heart complications down the road. Prevention is key; nip those periodontal problems in the bud! **So call Sierra Crest at 530-562-4089 to schedule your appointment.**



INGREDIENTS

Yield: 3 dozen.

- 2 ½ cups powdered sugar
- ¼ cup butter, softened
- 1 tablespoon milk
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- 2 (8 oz.) jars maraschino cherries with stems, well-drained
- 2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 2 tablespoons shortening

DIRECTIONS

1. In a small bowl, combine the sugar, butter, milk, and extract. Knead until smooth and pliable. Shape into 1-inch balls and flatten each into a 2-inch circle.
2. Wrap one circle around each cherry and lightly roll in hands. Place stems-up on waxed paper-lined baking sheet. Cover loosely and refrigerate 4 hours or overnight.
3. In a microwave, melt chocolate and shortening; stir until smooth. Holding on to the stems, dip cherries into chocolate; allow excess to drip off. Place on waxed paper until set. Store in a covered container. Refrigerate until hardened before serving.

Remember to brush after consuming!

PALEO-What?



EAT LIKE A CAVEMAN

Perhaps you've heard the word thrown around at a restaurant, or maybe it came up at work. However, do you know what it really means to eat paleo? At its core, it means to eat like you're from the Stone Age. No, really! The paleo diet is based on the premise that our Paleolithic predecessors were far healthier than we are today, and that the nutrition they got from their hunter-gatherer lifestyle is far more optimal for our bodies than our agriculturally-based diets today.

According to Robb Wolf, retired research biochemist, paleo expert, and author of the New York Times best-seller "The Paleo Solution: The Original Human Diet," we, as a species, have spent the last 99.5 percent of our existence adjusting to hunting and gathering for survival. We've been adapting so long, it's coded into our genes. Only the last 0.5 percent of human experience has been agriculturally based. Essentially, our bodies haven't caught up with our new systems.

So what does it mean to eat like your ancestors? Loren Cordain, recognized founder of the paleo movement, provides the following guidelines:

1. Increase protein, fiber, and beneficial fat consumption.
2. Eat more vitamins, especially from vegetables and fruits.
3. Eat foods lower on the glycemic index through decreased consumption of carbs. These foods metabolize more slowly and don't cause wonky blood sugar levels.
4. Consume far more potassium and far less sodium.
5. Balance your consumption of acidic- (cheese, salt, meat, legumes, and grains) and alkaline-producing foods (vegetables and fruits).