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THE ENDLESS PROCESS OF UNPACKING

Turning Our House Into a Home

Last month, I mentioned that we recently moved into a new home. We're deep in the midst of the unpacking process and starting the effort of turning our new house into a permanent home. While my excitement about settling in hasn't cooled one bit, I'm beginning to feel like the universe is playing an April Fools' joke on me when it comes to unpacking. I swear that all this stuff can't be ours! If I never have to cut through a strip of packing tape again, you won't hear me complaining.

That said, adding some personal touches to the home has been really rewarding. We've been doing some painting, and while I'm no Picasso, I do enjoy putting a Thomason-family stamp on our house. When you move in, it can feel like you're just renting or



Later in April, I'll be floating down the middle fork of the Salmon River with my eldest brother, Mike. He goes every year, but I haven't been able to join him because of life-changing events that have coincided with the trip. Last year, Max was born in April. The year before that, I was in the process of getting started at Eagle Dental Care. Three years ago, well, I have no excuse for that one. I just missed it. I'm so excited to be able to join him this year. The days will be spent floating and fishing, and the nights will see us sleeping on the shore. My brother is a certified mountain man, and he says it's the closest you can come to an Alaskan adventure in the lower 48.

"When you move in, it can feel like you're just renting or staying in a hotel room. Slowly but surely, though, we're planting down our roots and furniture. Our next step is to start building some memories."

staying in a hotel room. Slowly but surely, though, we're planting down our roots and furniture. Our next step is to start building some memories. I hope that when we look back on the early days in our new house, our kids remember the cardboard palace that was a jungle gym for them and a headache for their dad.

Speaking of painting, I'm excited to dye some Easter eggs with the kids this year. We'll get some respite from the moving madness when we head to Eastern Idaho for a big family celebration. We've done Easter at home for the past couple of years, so I'm looking forward to a bigger gathering this time around. Avy and Jett are the perfect ages to enjoy going on an Easter egg hunt, and, despite the fact they're the kids of a dentist, they love candy as much as the next little one. Max isn't old enough to hunt for anything outside arms' reach, but I'm sure he'll enjoy the trip all the same.

In other news, I want to extend a giant thank-you to all of our patients for referring their friends and family. Our practice is growing at a pretty remarkable rate, and I'm humbled by the enthusiasm you have for our work. To thank our patients for their referrals, we will start running a monthly contest for those who refer new folks to us. The prizes are going to be awesome, so be sure to stay tuned for information about the contests. If you want to stay up to date on all things Eagle Dental Care, don't forget to follow us on Facebook.

Oh, and if you need way too many boxes, I might know a guy looking to unload some. Just a thought.

-Dr. Chris Thomason

ONE-OF-A-KIND Naturescapes

If you're lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time, you might see rare magical sights — baby turtles scuttling toward water, glowing lagoons, or a shimmering sky. But when and where do you need to be to catch these natural wonders?

SEA TURTLES HATCHING IN HAWAII

On Oahu's North Shore, head to Turtle Beach, which gets its name from the many turtles that nest along its shores. During late spring and summer, the waves subside, allowing turtles to crawl onto the beach to lay their eggs. Baby turtles hatch at night and make their way to the water by the light of the moon. If you do head to the beach at night to see this spectacle, don't use white light, as it can disrupt the turtles' progress (that means no flash photography).

Eco tip:

Look, but don't touch! It's illegal to touch a sea turtle in Hawaii.

BIOLUMINESCENT PLANKTON IN JAMAICA

Imagine looking out at the water as the sky gets dark and seeing it turn a bright, glowing blue. That's the sight you might be treated to at Luminous Lagoon in Jamaica, where dinoflagellates, microscopic organisms in the

water, lend their glow to the lagoon. These tiny organisms thrive in areas where salt water and fresh water meet, making the lagoon in springtime an ideal place to see them.

Eco tip:

To ensure this magical sight will remain for years to come, always go with a "pack it in, pack it out" mentality. Take all of your belongings with you when you leave and be respectful of the beautiful environment that is yours to enjoy.

NORTHERN LIGHTS IN SCANDINAVIA

One of the most elusive natural wonders, the aurora borealis, can only be seen on dark nights in the most northern parts of the world. That makes Sweden and its Scandinavian neighbors a great place to see the phenomenon. From December through April, you'll have your best chance of seeing the northern lights. Sightings are dependent on solar activity, so it's impossible to predict the exact timing and location, but they're easier to see during the longer, darker nights of winter and early spring.

Eco tip:

Book your trip through a responsible travel company, such as those that practice a fair-trade policy.



FAMILY TIME IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Family adventures are a great way to grow closer and develop meaningful connections. But with lodging prices rising and the logistical nightmare that traveling with the entire family can be, many Americans are looking at a new option: ditching the beaches and resorts and heading to the great outdoors. Actually, we know this option isn't new at all. Spending time outdoors with family may very well be one of the most time-honored traditions ever.

CAMPING

Lodgings and flights are expensive, so going on a family vacation can cost thousands of dollars — and that's just for the basics! But camping only requires a tent, a fire, picnic food, and water. Rather than scarfing down fast food between flights and dealing with airport security, departure delays, and long flights, take a deep breath and roast marshmallows over the fire with the people you love.

HIKING

A hike with family is an easy way to escape the hustle and bustle of city life. All a hike requires is a trail and a sense of adventure. The best part of hiking is that you can tailor the distance to fit your family's needs. If

you have children or grandkids who aren't up for the challenge of an arduous daylong trek, there's sure to be a shorter scenic trail. If nothing else, you can always turn around and backtrack the way you came.

FISHING

Fishing is a great way to get out and do something relaxing yet challenging. It doesn't require a lot of skill or investment. All it takes is the willingness to learn and the desire to connect with nature. This is why fishing is the perfect activity for youngsters of all ages. So, what are you waiting for? Grab your rod and reel and head to the nearest lake or river.

While these are all great stand-alone options, together they form an amazing three-headed monster for your next family outing. By combining camping with a hike to a river or lake where you can go fishing, you are sure to create lasting memories with your family that will draw you closer together. Ditch the lines at the airport and the stress of travel. Unleash the possibilities of adventure in the great outdoors.

KARA'S CORNER

The Benefits of an Electric Toothbrush



I swear by my electric toothbrush, and I always recommend that patients switch from manual to electric. Many people balk at the idea of spending more than a couple of bucks on a toothbrush, but the increased upfront cost ends up paying for itself.

Basically, the only significant investment is in the system itself. You just need one or two bases for your whole family, because everyone can swap out the heads easily. Replacement heads are inexpensive, especially when they go on sale on Amazon. I can't remember the last time I paid standard retail price for a set. Not to mention, the increased effectiveness of electric toothbrushes could end up saving you money on dental care.

Why do electric toothbrushes work better than their manual counterparts? The motion and speed created by a motor can't be replicated by human hands, making the time spent brushing more productive. Most electric models also come equipped with timers that ensure you spend adequate time brushing. Sometimes, they'll even have alerts every 30 seconds to let you know it's time to switch to a different region of your mouth.

Electric brushes are a great option for everybody, but there are certain groups of people for whom they can be particularly beneficial. If you tend to develop plaque at a faster-than-average rate, an electric brush will help keep buildup at bay. For folks with arthritis and other conditions that limit dexterity, electric models also decrease the discomfort that can come from manual brushing. Those with braces and other orthodontic devices will discover that electric brushes are much better at clearing away hard-to-reach food stuck between wires. Finally, those of you who are naturally hard brushers — the type of people who fray a toothbrush in a month — will find that an electric model will decrease tissue damage associated with over-enthusiastic brushing.

For all of these reasons, it's a great decision to go electric. You probably don't use a flip phone anymore, so why use outmoded technology on your teeth?

TAKING CARE OF YOUR BABY'S ORAL HEALTH

Believe it or not, your infant's oral hygiene is important — even before they have teeth! Bacteria can build up inside your child's mouth, causing harm to their gums and, eventually, their teeth. Though children's teeth are temporary, they're still vulnerable to infection and decay when not taken care of properly. Listed below are a few simple ways to secure your infant's oral health.

YOUR DENTAL HEALTH

One important way to maintain your child's dental health is to maintain your own. Not only does this lead to good habits for the both of you, it can prevent bacteria from spreading. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, bacteria called streptococcus mutans can spread from mothers to their infants, which can lead to dental decay.

CLEANING

It's important to keep your infant's mouth clean. Bacteria can grow in their mouth and around their gums, creating infections even before baby teeth set in. Clean your infant's mouth at least twice a day or after each meal. Wash your hands, then wrap clean, damp gauze around your finger, and gently wipe your baby's gums.



APPOINTMENTS

Scheduling a dental appointment is a sure way to prevent problems. You should see a dentist regularly to make sure your teeth are healthy before and after your child is born. When your child turns 1 year old, or their first tooth appears, take your infant in for their first dental appointment.

By taking care of your dental health, you can take care of your infant's. Create good habits, schedule checkups, and clean regularly. Teeth or no teeth, oral health is important, and keeping up with it will benefit you and your child in the long run.



PASTA WITH TURKEY AND BROCCOLI

This simple, delicious recipe only takes 20 minutes from start to finish. It's also a great way to encourage kids to eat their broccoli. The next time you make pasta, leave the canned sauce in the pantry and make this instead!

INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 pound pasta (shells or orecchiette)
- 2 cups broccoli florets
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 pound ground turkey
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- Salt
- Parmesan cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook the pasta according to package directions. Add broccoli when pasta is 1 minute from done. Drain both and return to pot.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the turkey, garlic, crushed red pepper, and a pinch of salt. Cook while breaking up meat with a wooden spoon for 3–5 minutes.
3. Combine turkey with pasta and broccoli mixture, adding the remaining olive oil as you stir. Serve in bowls topped with Parmesan cheese.

(Recipeinspiredbyrealsimple.com)

LAUGHING GAS



Best office prank award goes to...