

INSIDE

Watching Christmas Movies With the Kids **page 1**

Why You Need a Go Bag **page 2**

Kara's Corner: The Benefits of Xylitol **page 2**

2 Harmful Habits That Lead to Broken Teeth **page 3**

Easy Holiday Party Cheese Fondue **page 3**

Is January the Best Month for Disneyland? **page 4**



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RUDOLPH ON REPEAT

Christmas at the Thomason House

This year will be our son Max's first Christmas, and we're so excited for him to experience the delights of the holidays. His siblings, Avy and Jett, will have no trouble getting him into the spirit. They're seasoned veterans at this point, and they know that once Thanksgiving dinner is digested, it's time to start looking forward to Santa. Over that weekend, we always decorate the house as a family.

I enjoy getting the house spruced up, but my favorite activity is hanging up ornaments on the tree. When I was growing up, my mom made unique ornaments every year. They would always be themed with a focus on self-improvement. I probably have 15 to 20 of them now. While decorating the tree, I find myself staring at the christmas ornaments my mom made each christmas season and reminiscing about family memories from my youth. Occasionally, my wife, Meredith, will catch me staring at an ornament, reminiscing about the past. She might even need to prompt me to hustle it along. After all, it seems there's always more decorating to do.



Occasionally, my wife, Meredith, will catch me staring at an ornament, reminiscing about the past. She might even need to prompt me to hustle it along. After all, it seems there's always more decorating to do.

Watching my kids experience the holidays, I've noticed a funny thing about how times change. Meredith and I introduced our kids to the classic Christmas movies — "Rudolph," "Frosty the Snowman," etc. While the joy they experience from the movies is the same as it was when I was a boy, the way they find that joy is not. I remember my siblings and I would mark the calendars for the one time these movies would appear on TV. If we missed it, we had to wait another year to get a shot. These days, my kids watch them over and over. All they have to do is hit play, and it's an endless loop of Christmas fun.

To me, these simple pleasures are what the holidays are all about. With the little ones, we don't travel to Eastern Idaho for Christmas, so it's mostly a quiet time with our family. Sitting at home with a cup of hot chocolate in hand and watching them enjoy the festivities always puts a smile on my face.

This year, the holiday atmosphere won't be limited to the office. The team at Eagle Dental Care will be putting up some decorations, and we're excited to share in the spirit of Christmas with our patients. Not to sound cheesy, but I receive a present every day in the form of being able to treat such an amazing group of people.

I want to wish everyone reading this a merry Christmas and happy holidays. I hope you have the chance to enjoy your favorite traditions. But I will say that if we have just a touch less snow than last year, you won't find me complaining.

-Dr. Chris Thomason

IS JANUARY THE BEST MONTH FOR DISNEYLAND?



The best day ever with the family at Disneyland

January isn't known for much — broken resolutions and Martin Luther King Jr. Day, mostly. But if you're looking to escape the cold or take your family on a post-holiday adventure, next month might be the best time to travel to the Happiest Place on Earth.

The Best Crowds

According to Disneyland's own figures, the first full week of January through the middle of February is the slowest time of year at the park. Visitors report never spending more than 15 minutes waiting for a ride. The Fourth of July, however, finds visitors waiting over two hours for Star Tours and Splash Mountain.

In Winter, Disneyland closes a little earlier. But if you have young kids, this won't affect your plans much. They often close rides for maintenance during this time, but never more than one or two at a time. With all the open options, you won't feel robbed.

Let's Talk About the Weather

Does January sound cold and rainy? Don't worry. The average temperature is still a balmy 66 degrees, and January gets just as much rainfall as peak months like December (winter break) and March (spring break).

Check weather reports since the rainfall varies greatly depending on the temperature of the ocean that month. But bear in mind, Disneyland is the No. 2 theme park on the planet, raking in 18 million visitors a year. It wouldn't attract such huge crowds if the weather wasn't theme park-worthy 99 percent of the time.

So, what's the best month to visit Disneyland? It's a trick question. The real answer is *whatever month you go*. Disneyland is magic! But if there's a month that's better than the rest, we'll say it's January.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

THE IMPORTANCE OF A GO BAG

Natural disasters happen all the time. From hurricanes and tornadoes to wildfires and earthquakes, our homes are never entirely safe from potential hazards. While natural disasters aren't an everyday worry — and the 2017 hurricane and fire season is finally behind us — nothing is better than being prepared. You need a go bag!

A go bag is something you can keep by the door in case of any kind of emergency. With essentials at the ready, you eliminate the possibility of a last-minute scramble. Here are the most critical items to include.



Batteries and Flashlights

Not only do you want a selection of standard batteries for your devices, but you also want portable lithium-ion batteries to charge your cellphones and other mobile devices. Additionally, after you've packed these items, be sure to check them every three months. You want

to ensure they are functioning and at full capacity so you can rely on them if the time comes.

First-Aid Kit

You can find well-stocked first-aid kits online (including on Amazon.com) that are packed to the brim with most or all of the essentials. You may want to include baby wipes and a multi-tool in the kit as well.

Medications

When it comes to go bags, medications can be tricky, but they are necessary. Include a supply of any medications you take (anywhere from a week's to a month's supply) and be sure to rotate them out on a regular basis. This ensures that any prescription medications are up-to-date and that there is no risk of potential expirations.

Documentation

Make a photocopy of any and all critical documents you have and store the copies in a watertight container (such as a freezer bag) in the go bag. Include your birth certificate, driver's license, and Social Security card. You may also want to include a copy of any Medicare cards, insurance information, your will (along with any powers of attorney), and some proof of address. Some people even include marriage, adoption, and naturalization certificates.

2 HARMFUL HABITS THAT LEAD TO BROKEN TEETH



Do you know when most dental emergencies happen? I'll give you a hint: "Here comes Santa Claus, here comes Santa Claus." That's right — holiday season.

Why is this? Well, the abundance of hard candy and popcorn between October and January wreaks havoc on your teeth. Often, when a broken tooth reaches emergency status, it's actually already cracked. At that point, all it takes is a piece of hard food for it to reach breaking point. Fortunately, there are simple ways to improve your tooth health and prevent cracks during the holiday season.

First, stop overindulging in sugary foods! Sugar breaks down your enamel, so the more you eat, the weaker your teeth become. Plaque builds up in your mouth whenever you consume food. The bacteria that make up plaque love sugar, and when they consume it, they produce a certain type of acid. This acid wears away healthy tooth enamel and eventually breaks down teeth. Even worse, if you already have a crack (even one you can't see or feel), sticky, sugary foods will further irritate the area. And though it might seem like a healthy alternative, dried fruit is on this list of culprits — its dense sugars easily cling to your teeth.

To combat this, make small changes to lower your sugar intake. Replace your daily soda with a cup of tea or sparkling water. Another beneficial change is switching from dried fruits to fresh ones.

Sugar aside, you may have another addiction that harms your teeth. Are you a serial fingernail or ice chewer? Both can lead to cracked and broken teeth. If you aren't looking to drop a vacation's worth of dough on your dental visits, consider quitting — and quick. The Academy of General Dentistry estimates habitual nail biters will spend up to \$4,000 more in dental bills over their lifetime.

Finding a replacement routine for detrimental chewing habits is key to kicking the habit for good.

Carry a pack of baby carrots to munch when you're tempted to reach for your fingernails. You can also place a rubber band around your wrist and snap it when you reach for a nail to nibble. Each painful snap can serve as a reminder to stop your destructive habit.

Talk with your dentist about other ways to strengthen your teeth and prevent breakage. After all, you want to spend your holidays in the easy chair, not the dentist's!

KARA'S CORNER SWEET AND GOOD FOR YOUR TEETH?!



parts of plants, doesn't break down like sugar, because bacteria cannot digest it. It also benefits from having a neutral pH (it's neither acidic nor basic), protecting your teeth from decay and sustaining a healthy environment in your mouth. As an added bonus, xylitol stimulates saliva production. Saliva is your body's natural defense against decay, and more of it is never a bad thing.

Where can you find this magic sweetener? Sugar-free gum is often the most common place. If you're shopping for gum, take a second to check ingredients. Xylitol should be one of the first listed on the package. When you opt for gum with xylitol, you actually benefit from having three to five pieces per day. It's hard to imagine a hygienist recommending you chew more gum, but that's the case with xylitol-based gum.

You can also purchase xylitol in packets to sweeten everything from coffee to cookies. The sweetness is much more concentrated than in traditional sugar, so be careful how much you use. If you're baking with xylitol, you'll also need to look up recipes that account for how it differs from sugar. But you can still get delicious results!

This holiday season, try to include a little xylitol in your favorite treats. It may require a bit of tweaking to your traditional favorites, but your teeth will thank you.

If there's one long-held truism when it comes to foods that harm your health, it's that sweetness is usually cause for concern. The bacteria in your mouth eat sugar, then create acids that eat away at your enamel. Even when sugar is replaced by artificial sweeteners, you don't eliminate the risk for decay. Artificial sweeteners like aspartame, saccharin, and sucralose are highly acidic, which accelerates the rate of decay.

Recently, however, new natural sweeteners have arrived on the market that provide great flavor without posing a risk to your oral health. Chief among them is xylitol. This natural sweetener, derived from the fibrous

www.IndianaRestoration.com

EASY HOLIDAY PARTY CHEESE FONDUE

Scrambling to find something for the holiday potluck? This fondue is sure to impress!

INGREDIENTS

- ¾ cup dry white wine
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- Salt to taste
- 1 (8-ounce) package sliced Swiss cheese
- Foods to dip (apple slices, bread cubes, roasted vegetables, etc.)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large bowl, whisk together wine and cornstarch.
2. Chop cheese slices into small, uniform pieces.
3. Rub clove of garlic all over the sides and bottom of a heavy-bottomed pot, then discard.
4. Heat wine mixture over medium-low heat in the pot until thick and bubbling. Add some cheese and slowly whisk. When nearly smooth, add more cheese and whisk gently. Repeat until all cheese is melted. If mixture seems too tight, add 1 tablespoon wine.
5. Season with salt and serve immediately. Keep pot on low heat to keep the fondue dipable.

Recipe source inspired by PinchofYum.com.

LAUGHING GAS

So far, holiday shopping has consisted of me buying myself presents...so I'd say it's been a success.



someecards
user card

There are two kinds of people when Christmas decorations appear in the shops...

