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**WINTER ORAL
HEALTH:
PROTECTING YOUR
SMILE DURING THE
COLD SEASON**



Welcome to the January 2026 issue of the CareGuard Oral Health Bulletin.

Winter is a time of colder temperatures, seasonal illnesses, holiday leftovers, and changes in daily routines. These factors can affect oral health in ways many people don't realize.

This month's bulletin highlights simple, evidence-based tips to help protect your teeth and gums throughout the winter months.

WINTER CAN AFFECT YOUR ORAL HEALTH

Cold weather brings unique challenges that may increase the risk of dental problems.

Common winter oral health concerns include:

- Dry mouth caused by indoor heating
- Increased consumption of sugary comfort foods and hot beverages
- Cold sensitivity in exposed teeth
- Reduced water intake during colder months
- Irregular oral hygiene routines during holidays and travel

The good news is that most winter oral health problems can be prevented with a few simple daily habits.

WHY DRY MOUTH MATTERS

Saliva plays an essential role in protecting your mouth.
It helps:

- ✓ Wash away food particles
- ✓ Neutralize harmful acids
- ✓ Reduce cavity-causing bacteria
- ✓ Protect tooth enamel

Indoor heating and reduced water intake can contribute to dry mouth during winter.

To help prevent dry mouth:

- Drink water throughout the day
- Limit sugary drinks
- Chew sugar-free gum if appropriate
- Breathe through your nose whenever possible

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WINTER HEALTHY SMILE CHECKLIST

Make these habits part of your daily routine:

- ✓ Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- ✓ Floss once every day.
- ✓ Drink plenty of water.
- ✓ Limit sugary snacks and sticky holiday treats.
- ✓ Replace your toothbrush every 3–4 months or after recovering from an illness.
- ✓ Wear a mouthguard during winter sports such as hockey or skiing.



HOT DRINKS AND YOUR TEETH



Many winter beverages contain added sugar.

Examples include:

- Flavored coffee drinks
- Sweetened hot chocolate
- Sweet tea
- Holiday specialty beverages

Water remains the healthiest choice for both your body and your teeth.

If you enjoy sweet drinks, try drinking them with meals instead of sipping throughout the day.

ORAL HEALTH FACTS

Fact: Tooth sensitivity may become more noticeable during cold weather.

Fact: Dry mouth increases the risk of cavities.

Fact: Drinking water supports healthy saliva production.

Fact: Good oral hygiene helps reduce plaque buildup all year long.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Affordable dental care may be available through:

- Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)
- Community Health Centers
- Dental school clinics
- State and local public health departments
- Medicaid dental programs (for eligible individuals)
- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

Early preventive care is often less expensive than emergency dental treatment.



THIS MONTH'S HEALTHY SMILE CHALLENGE

- ☐ **DRINK ONE EXTRA BOTTLE OF WATER EVERY DAY**
- ☐ **BRUSH FOR TWO FULL MINUTES TWICE DAILY**
- ☐ **FLOSS EVERY EVENING**
- ☐ **CHOOSE WATER INSTEAD OF ONE SUGARY DRINK EACH DAY**
- ☐ **SHARE ONE ORAL HEALTH TIP WITH A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER**

Small daily habits can protect your smile throughout the winter and beyond.

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