

FOOD BRIEFS



Photo courtesy of Olive Garden

Olive Garden introduces Lifetime Pasta Pass

ORLANDO, Fla. – Olive Garden is bringing back its Never Ending Pasta Pass and introducing a Lifetime Pasta Pass.

The Lifetime Pasta Pass includes a lifetime of unlimited servings of guests' favorite pastas, homemade sauces and toppings, accompanied by unlimited soup or salad and breadsticks.

"With the introduction of our new Lifetime Pasta Pass, we're excited to be a part of our biggest fans' memories around the table for years to come," said Jennifer Arguello, executive vice president of marketing.

Guests can purchase one of 24,000 Never Ending Pasta Passes for \$100 (plus tax). At the time of purchase, the first 50 guests to complete their transaction and opt-in for a Lifetime Pasta Pass can upgrade for an additional \$400 (\$500 total, plus tax). Pasta Passes will go on sale at beginning Aug. 15 at 2 p.m. at www.PastaPass.com for 30 minutes or until they are sold out. Guests are encouraged to visit the website early to join the online waiting room starting at 1:55 p.m.

Festival features international cuisine, children's activities

MONROE – Community Events Foundation promises food and fun at the second annual Taste of the World International Food Festival.

The event takes place from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 12 at the Monroe Plaza Shopping Center, 1600 Skyway Drive. It will include entertainment, vendors and a children's zone.

Visit www.communityeventsfoundation.org for details.

Lady Go-Go preps for grand opening

INDIAN TRAIL – Lady Go-Go's will soon hold a grand opening for its new permanent location.

The food truck bills itself as serving "authentic Mexican street food with a vegan twist." The grand opening will take place from 3:30 to 10 p.m. Aug. 20 at 3816 Sardis Church Road.

Firebirds staffer elected to hospitality board

CHARLOTTE – Tammy Calhoun, director of learning and development for Firebirds Wood Fired Grill has been named to the The Council of Hotel and Restaurant Trainers board of directors for 2019-20.



Calhoun

Calhoun joined Firebirds' corporate team in 2016 to develop its talent and implement internal learning strategies and comprehensive

training programs.

For four years, she participated in the Women's Foodservice Forum, the premier leadership development community for collective insights and connects empowering women in the foodservice industry.

Chick-fil-A adds mac & cheese to menu

ATLANTA – Chick-fil-A is offering mac & cheese nationwide as a side option with any lunch, dinner or catering order.

The new mac & cheese – the first permanent side added to the menu since 2016 – is a classic recipe featuring a special blend of cheeses including cheddar, parmesan and Romano. It is baked in restaurant each day.

Participating restaurants across the country will also begin offering Frosted Caramel Coffee, which is available through Nov. 9. It is a hand-spun treat that combines Chick-fil-A's custom blend of cold-brewed coffee with vanilla Icedream dessert and caramel syrup.

Chefs advance in statewide cooking competition

The North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association announced the 11 chefs competing in the Charlotte regional round leading up to the fourth annual NCRLA Chef Showdown, presented by Got to be NC Agriculture.

The regional event takes place Aug. 19 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Central Piedmont Community College. It is closed to the public.

Chefs were chosen based on their performance judged by a panel of culinary experts.

Savory chefs:

Steven Goff, AUX Bar, Asheville
Richard Gras, Omni Grove Park Inn, Asheville
Cory Haigler, The Westin Charlotte, Charlotte
Adam Reed, Santé, Matthews
Matthew Shephard, McNinch House Restaurant, Charlotte
Paul Verica, The Stanley, Charlotte
Jake Vollmar, Village at River Landing, Wallace

Pastry chefs:

Gerald Hawkins, Gaston Country Club, Gastonia
Ryan Stipp, Omni Grove Park Inn, Asheville
Jamie Turner, Earl's Grocery and Soul Food Sessions, Charlotte
Mary Jayne Wilson, Amelie's French Bakery & Café, Charlotte

The dishes chefs cook at regionals will determine who wins "NCRLA Chef of the Year" and "NCRLA Pastry Chef of the Year." Winners will be announced at the NCRLA Chef Showdown final event in September.

Established in 1947, the North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association works to advance and protect North Carolina's \$23.5 billion restaurant, foodservice and lodging industry. The association provides access to the resources and support restaurant and lodging professionals need to lead thriving businesses. To learn more about NCRLA or its membership opportunities and benefits, visit www.ncrla.org.

Tips to keep tooth decay away

by Seth Newman
Contributor



Sugar may satisfy cravings, but your teeth could pay for it later. Adobe Stock image

Eating may be a necessity, but when it comes to your teeth and gums, all that munching also can lead to quite a battle raging in your mouth.

Some of those foods – especially the sugary and starchy ones – act like invading forces, feeding the bacteria that cause tooth decay and gum disease, even as the saliva in your mouth fights back as best it can, trying to ward off the detrimental effects of the acids and enzymes.

"Tooth decay can be a problem for people of all ages – children, teenagers and adults – and yet it's completely avoidable," says Dr. Seth Newman, an orthodontist and co-author with Dr. Steve Giannoutsos of "Giving It To You Straight: Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Orthodontics But Were Afraid To Ask."

Newman and Giannoutsos say that there are plenty of ways that what's in your diet affects not just your weight, but also your teeth and gums.

"Most people know that sugar and processed snacks can lead to tooth decay, even if they don't always avoid those foods," Giannoutsos says. "But there are other foods that also can be troublesome, and many people may not realize that."

He and Newman provide a few tips for making sure your diet isn't harmful to your oral health:

- Watch out for bread – and chips. Chomp down on a candy bar and you might think to yourself that you better brush soon, lest the sugar go to work on your teeth before you can head it off. But the same thought might not occur to you when you're eating breadsticks. Yet, foods that are high in carbohydrates and starches – such as bread, chips, pasta and crackers – contribute to the plaque acid that attacks tooth enamel.

- Braces come with extra concerns. Beyond the usual dental care, there are additional dietary worries to consider when you have braces. People wearing braces should avoid foods

that are too hard, sticky or chewy, Newman says, such as gum, nuts, corn chips, hard taco shells, hard candy and popcorn, just to name a few.

- Develop good food-choice habits. When you're grocery shopping, always check the nutrition labels. "Selecting snacks that are low in sugar can help combat tooth decay," Giannoutsos says. "If poor nutrition continues, your oral health will decline, potentially resulting in gum disease and tooth loss." Fruits and vegetables that are rich in fiber are a good choice for improving your oral health. Examples are apples, carrots and celery. In addition, milk, cheese and other dairy products are excellent options because of the calcium, phosphate and vitamin D they contain. Finally, drink fluoridated water as much as possible. If your tap water doesn't include fluoride, check with your dentist for a fluoride supplement.

Ultimately, more is at stake than your teeth and gums. Left untreated, Giannoutsos and Newman say, oral-health problems can have a detrimental effect on your overall health, contributing to such conditions as heart disease and diabetes. That's an additional reason why regular checkups – along with brushing and flossing – are so critical.

"It's hard to resist your inner sweet tooth, so I wouldn't say that you should never indulge in treats," Newman says. "But when you do, brushing your teeth as quickly as possible afterwards will help decrease the risk of decay."

About Seth Newman, DDS

Dr. Seth Newman is an orthodontist and co-author, with Dr. Steve Giannoutsos, of "Giving It To You Straight: Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Orthodontics But Were Afraid To Ask." Visit www.askthethothos.com for details.

A poor diet leads to bad hair days, hair loss

by Chris Varona
Contributor

Poor nutrition literally impacts people from head to toe because diet can significantly affect your hair — and that includes losing it.

Healthy, attractive hair is often due to a combination of factors, including genetics, physical health, hair care and eating habits. But if someone is experiencing hair breakage, hair loss, or lost luster, their poor diet may be mostly to blame, says Dr. Chris Varona, a hair restoration specialist and the owner of Varona Hair Restoration in Newport Beach, Calif.

"If you're not putting the right fuel in, your hair may not be getting the nutrition that it needs to thrive," says Varona (www.varonahairrestoration.com). "But for some, a few simple changes in their diet can have a dramatic effect on their hair's appearance and health."

"And in many cases, if the diet deficiencies are addressed, hair loss stops or reverses."

Varona discusses the most important nutrients for healthy hair and the foods that supply them:

- Essential fatty acids. These are vital for healthy skin, hair, and nails. "Omega-3 fatty acids nourish and protect hair, help in regrowth, and add a silky shine," Varona says. "Fatty fish like salmon has lots of omega-3, and walnuts, chia seeds, flaxseeds and soybeans are also a good source of this healthy hair nutrient."

- B vitamins. B vitamins are essential for hair growth, provide extra support to healthy hair and help it maintain lustrous integrity. "They help create red blood cells, which carry oxygen and nutrients to the scalp and hair follicles," Varona says. "Many vegetarians and vegans have a deficiency of vitamins B6, B12 and folic acid, important nutrients for healthy hair. You can find B6 in bananas and potatoes, B12 in meat and dairy products, and folic

acid in citrus fruits and tomatoes."

- Protein. Hair is composed of a protein called keratin. "If you're short on protein, your hair won't thrive," Varona says. "Animal products like meat, fish, and eggs are a good source of protein. You can also get protein from plants, including beans, lentils, nuts, and grains."

- Vitamin D. "Vitamin D keeps the skin, bones, and hair healthy," Varona says. "Some studies have linked vitamin D deficiency to hair loss. You can find vitamin D in fatty fish, liver, egg yolks, and in fortified foods like milk."

- Iron. Severe iron deficiency, also called anemia, causes hair loss in some patients. "It is especially common in women with heavy menstrual periods and is easily mistaken for female pattern baldness," Varona says. "Meats including chicken, fish, and red meats are good sources of easily absorbable iron. Plant sources of iron include beans and lentils, dark leafy greens, and potatoes. Many breads and cereals are also enriched with iron."

- Trace minerals. These include iron, chromium, copper, zinc, iodine, manganese and selenium. "A daily multivitamin can be helpful to ensure you're getting those vitamins and minerals that your body, and your hair, need most," Varona says.

"A healthy, well-rounded diet often contains all the foods and nutrients needed for beautiful, healthy hair," Varona says. "A simple blood test can check for nutritional deficiencies, and if they are found, a change in diet or supplementation may improve your hair and stop hair loss."

About Dr. Chris Varona

Dr. Chris Varona is a leading hair restoration specialist and the owner of Varona Hair Restoration in Newport Beach, Calif. Visit www.varonahairrestoration.com for details.

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