



## Enjoy the Iowa State Fair Without Ruining Your Teeth

Deep-fried pecan pie on a stick. Double Dutch almond funnel cake. Cookie dough...in a waffle...on a stick.

Nothing compares to the fun, inventive and downright delicious sweet offerings at the Iowa State Fair. And while it's tempting to go overboard (when in Rome, right?), you can still enjoy the fair without eating every sweet under the sun. And amazingly, there are some delicious and healthful options at the fair. Take advantage of these hidden gems, and your health will thank you.

### Top Oral Health Picks at the Fair

One of the things that makes the Iowa State Fair so great is that it has something for everyone. One booth may offer chocolate-covered chunky bacon maple nougat on a stick, and the next may offer fresh strawberries, pineapple, kiwi and apples on a stick. You can imagine which one is better for your dental health.

Why is sugar such a no-no when it comes to your oral health? Because the bacteria that harm your tooth enamel feed on sugar. The longer sugar stays in your mouth within easy access of these bacteria, the more likely you are to develop tooth decay and cavities.

So, does this mean you have to say sayonara to all the delicious food at the fair? Not at all.

The Iowa State Fair offers a host of healthful options—many of them on the fair-favorite delivery method “on a stick.” A few great options include the protein-packed pork chop on a stick, calcium-rich caprese salad on a stick and fresh fruit on a stick with yogurt dipping sauce for an extra nutritional jolt of calcium.

That's just scratching the surface. Check out the Iowa State Fair's full list of healthier food options [here](#).

### Can't Resist an Over-the-top Sweet Treat?

If forgoing the on-a-stick sweets isn't an option for you, go ahead and indulge—in moderation. Also, opting for chocolate or ice cream as opposed to hard and sticky sweets—which stay on your teeth longer—is a good rule of thumb.

Swigging some water to wash away sugar from your teeth, chewing sugar-free gum to stimulate saliva production—or better yet, packing a travel toothpaste, toothbrush and floss to quickly clean up in a restroom after your meal—will help minimize the negative effects of sugar in your mouth.

### **Delta Dental of Iowa Will Be at the Fair**

As the provider of the largest dental network in the state of Iowa, Delta Dental of Iowa is proud to attend the Iowa State Fair. Visit our tent on the [Grand Concourse](#) for great dental and vision prizes, endless fun, and information about our [Rethink Your Drink](#) program.

### **Sources**

<https://www.iowastatefair.org/food/healthy-choices/>

## **Oral Health Head-to-Head: DIY Versus Store-Bought Toothpaste**

Ask any Do-It-Yourself—better known as DIY—devotee, and they'll tell you how satisfying it is to make something by hand. Whether it's home décor or hair care, people are flocking to craft stores and YouTube channels to recreate their favorite store-bought products.

Some DIYers are even concocting homemade dental products—namely, toothpaste. Using materials like coconut oil, baking soda, essential oils, sea salt and even cacao nibs (a foundational ingredient of chocolate), makers are shunning the stuff on store shelves in favor of their own hand-crafted toothpaste.

One of the top benefits of making something yourself is that you know exactly what's in it, but is a homemade toothpaste as effective at protecting your oral health as the store-bought standbys?

In some ways, homemade toothpaste can work as well as a store-bought paste. One study showed DIY versions removed plaque as well as store-bought counterparts.

But the benefits of DIY toothpastes begin to dwindle when you consider that they don't contain fluoride. Fluoride is an important player in oral health, as its use in dental hygiene products is linked to lower rates of tooth decay. Yes, you can replenish fluoride stores through boosting your drinking water consumption, but switching from a store-bought toothpaste to a homemade version will likely reduce the amount of fluoride your teeth are exposed to each day.

Today's professionally manufactured toothpastes also contain other benefits, from easing painful tooth sensitivity and preventing gum disease to promoting a whiter smile. These benefits aren't proven in DIY toothpastes.

Additionally, store-bought toothpastes are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and some are endorsed by the American Dental Association (ADA)—these assurances help instill confidence that the toothpastes you're using are the safest and most effective for your oral health.

**Our DIY take:** It feels great to make something yourself, but homemade doesn't always mean higher quality. To get the most benefit for your oral health, store-bought toothpastes are your best option.