



PORTALE  
DENTAL

# PORTALE POST



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## The Secret to 44 Years in Dentistry

I've been practicing dentistry for over 40 years now, and a lot has changed in that time. Dental technology has improved, techniques have become more refined, and treatment is far better than it was when I was getting my start. But with all of these changes, one thing has remained the same: the relationships.

I love building relationships with people and really getting to know them. Sometimes, I may only see a person twice a year, but I enjoy that time we have together. For patients who have been with me for a number of years, or even decades, it's like we've been on a journey together. I get to watch families form and kids grow up. It's incredible.

At the same time, I can help people. I'm working with them to achieve their goal of having a healthy smile. Having a healthy smile can do wonders for a person. It can renew their confidence and help them feel great about themselves.

More recently, I've been working with patients who have sleep disorders, specifically sleep apnea. Sleep apnea is an awful condition that can have a detrimental impact on a person's health. It can lead to high blood pressure, diabetes, fatigue, Alzheimer's, dementia, and premature death. These are just a few examples of how bad sleep apnea can be.

I'm excited that I can help people with this condition by providing my patients with education, treatment, and alternatives to CPAP machines. Sleep apnea affects a lot of people. At the same time, many people don't know they have it, or they don't know what to do about it — so they live with it.

I started offering sleep apnea services after I realized just how much it was needed. As you may know, I offer sedation dentistry, which helps patients relax if they get nervous or anxious at the dentist.

One day I gave a patient a normal IV sedation drip. It was something I had done countless times before. While he was sedated, he

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started to experience convulsions. I double-checked my monitor, and everything looked normal. But clearly, that wasn't the case.

I looked in to why this had happened, and it turned out the patient suffered from sleep apnea. While he was sedated, his body relaxed, and certain muscles in the jaw and throat also relaxed. This made it hard for him to breathe and his body reacted.

Many people go through this every night, and they don't know their problem has to do with restricted breathing. Today, this individual is one of my star dental patients, as well as one of my star sleep apnea patients. That's something we're both thankful for.

And that's really what keeps me passionate about what I do after 44 years in dentistry. I am constantly learning and applying what I've learned. The dental field is always changing. You could say it keeps me on my toes. But at the end of the day, I get to continue to help people in new and better ways, and that makes every day worth it.

—Dr. Portale

# 3 Tips for First-Time Travelers to Israel



This past summer, my wife and I traveled to Israel for the first time. We had a wonderful time and a chance to take in what the beautiful country offered. The people were welcoming and the food was phenomenal — it was certainly an experience worth taking. Here are a few tips for anyone else who may be considering a first-time trip to Israel.

## Culture Shock

For first time visitors, there can be some culture shock. Practically everyone in Israel must join the military for two years after they turn 18. As part of this, you will see young folks patrolling with firearms. Coming from the U.S., it can be an odd sight. However it's perfectly normal, and you can go about your business exploring and taking in the sights.

## Safety

Before traveling to Israel, people make many assumptions about safety. While there are areas of conflict in the region, chances are you will not see any of it — at least nothing as it's portrayed on TV. Israel is a safe destination and they take security very seriously. Many travelers report walking in metropolitan areas both during day and night without experiencing any trouble. However, if should you find yourself in an area of high tension or potential violence, leave if possible or seek immediate shelter.

## Shabbat

Visitors will notice many shops, restaurants, and tourist spots close for Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath. Even many forms of public transit come to a halt in certain areas, particularly Jerusalem. It's good to plan accordingly, as it can be harder to find open businesses on Friday evening through Saturday. If you're in Tel Aviv, for instance, Shabbat isn't as widely practiced and more businesses tend to stay open.

Israel is an incredible locale with something new to discover around every corner. Have fun and give yourself time to take in the history and culture of the country.



## Tips for Easing the Symptoms of TMD

It's a strange feeling for anyone who's experienced it: waking up to find that your jaw is extremely sore, maybe even to the point where you can't fully open or close your mouth. Sufferers report various degrees of discomfort, but anyone who knows how it feels agrees that temporomandibular joint (TMJ) pain hurts. When it becomes chronic, it is referred to as temporomandibular joint disorder (TMD).

There are still no definitive answers as to what causes TMJ, though doctors believe stress, anxiety, bruxism (an unconscious grinding of the teeth), and joint imbalances may all contribute. Most cases last a few weeks, but if you suffer from TMJ for longer than that, you should consult your dentist or physician.

If you're waking up with jaw pain, there are a few things you can do to manage the symptoms at home. Here are some suggestions from the Temporomandibular Joint Association (TMJA) and the Mayo Clinic:

- Apply a moist heat compress to the jaw to reduce pain and increase function.
- Apply an ice pack to ease the pain and reduce inflammation (wrap it with a thin cloth to keep it from touching the skin).
- Try sleeping on your side.
- Relax the jaw by consciously unclenching and taking deep breaths.
- Eat soft foods.

Some medical professionals prescribe an oral splint to stabilize the jaw and reduce pain. But in one recent clinical trial at the Tokyo Medical and Dental University, they found that therapeutic jaw exercises helped patients recover faster from TMD symptoms than splints. A physical therapist can show you similar exercises that will reduce your TMJ pain.

The effectiveness of surgical treatments to address TMJ disorders is still unclear, so talk to your dentist or medical provider to see what kinds of less invasive treatments are available. While there is such a thing as a TMJ specialist, there are many treatments that come from varying schools of thought and are not always based on scientific evidence. Working with your general dentist may be just as effective for you. Some patients have found relief through the TruDenta treatment program, which combines massage therapy, cold laser therapy, microcurrents, and ultrasound to treat the symptoms of TMD. Others have found acupuncture and other forms of alternative medicine to be effective.

Given all the options, the first step to address your jaw pain is to educate yourself so you can make the TMJ treatment decision that is right for you.



# Defining Sleep Apnea

Sleep apnea affects millions of Americans, with thousands more diagnosed each year. Most people know someone with sleep apnea.

The term sleep apnea does not refer to one single condition. The root cause differs from person to person. There have been a number of studies done to better understand what sleep apnea is, how it affects the body, and how it can be properly treated.



In some cases, the issue is muscular. When we sleep, the muscles in the jaw relax. When this happens, the position of the jaw changes. For some people, the jaw can sit too far back, which can obstruct the airway, leading to snoring and sleep apnea.

As a method of treatment, many people turn to CPAP machines. This device forces air through your airway, bypassing obstructions. The problem is, CPAP machines don't work for everyone. Just as the root cause for sleep apnea differs between people, how we successfully treat it can differ as well.

In short, sleep apnea is defined as breathing interruptions during sleep. While a person is asleep, they may stop breathing dozens, even hundreds, of times. It can lead to snoring, headaches, fatigue, anxiety, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

In the past, obesity was often linked to sleep apnea as an underlying cause in some people. In reality, it's much more complex. While obesity can impact a person's ability to breathe while asleep, it's not always the direct cause of sleep apnea.

CPAP machines aren't the most comfortable devices, and they can take a month or longer to get used to. Because of this, it's not uncommon for people to give up using the device simply because it's uncomfortable or they are taking too long to adapt.

It's all about finding the right treatment for you or a loved one. Every person is different and has different needs, and we can help determine the best next steps. If you have questions or concerns about sleep apnea, give us a call. We're here to help you get that full night of sleep you deserve.



## Beet, Mint, and Ricotta Hummus

### Ingredients:

- 1 6-ounce beet (about the size of an adult fist), scrubbed
- 1 15 1/2-ounce can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1/3 cup tahini, well mixed
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 cup ricotta cheese
- 1 garlic clove, grated
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, or more to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon fresh ground pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground coriander
- Mint leaves, poppy seeds, and olive oil, for garnish

### Directions:

1. Heat oven to 425 F.
2. Wrap beet tightly in foil. On a foil-lined baking sheet, roast wrapped beet until fork tender, about 60–70 minutes.
3. While beet is roasting, blend chickpeas, tahini, lemon juice, ricotta, garlic, salt, pepper, and coriander until smooth.
4. Once beet is cool enough to handle, use a paper towel to remove beet skin. Trim root end and cut into small pieces. Add to blender or food processor, and blend until entire mixture is smooth. Add additional salt if desired.
5. Transfer to a shallow bowl, top with garnishes, and serve.

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INSIDE This Issue

-  A Life of Learning
-  3 Israel Travel Tips!  
Tips for Managing Your TMJ Pain
-  Is Sleep Apnea Ruining Your Night?  
Beet, Mint, and Ricotta Hummus
-  Why Charities Hate Spring-Cleaning

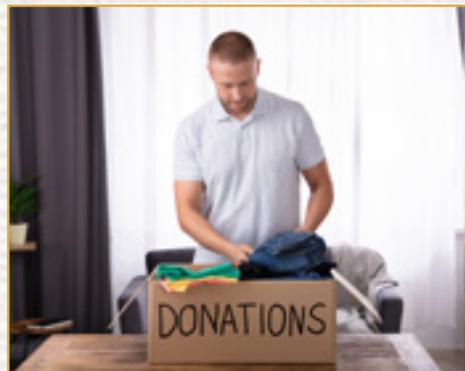
# Donate With Care

## THE RIGHT WAY TO DONATE AFTER SPRING-CLEANING

Spring is in the air, and it's time to celebrate with another round of spring-cleaning. Banish the clutter and make room in your life for something new! Many charities see a sharp increase in donations as spring-cleaning season starts. Donating your used books, kids' toys, and gently worn clothing allows your old items to have a second life. However, when filling that donation box, make sure you're donating each item because it can do good and not just because you feel bad about throwing it away.

Charities have a big problem with well-meaning citizens dropping off items that are better left in the trash. There are many items charities simply cannot handle. Most charities will have lists of items they can and cannot accept on their websites. Some items that you should not donate include:

- Expired medications
- Old TVs
- Cribs
- Loose remote controls
- Personal care items, like soap, shampoo, or makeup
- Mattresses
- Carpets
- Tangled cords or phone chargers
- Any broken, damaged, or dirty items



These items may be unsafe to sell, costly to ship, or impossible to refurbish effectively. When a charity regularly receives items they cannot use, they have to spend hours of manpower sorting through things that end up in the trash anyway. This process can be expensive for organizations with already-strained resources. Some local charities spend over \$1,000 a year on dumpster and trash removal fees for unusable donations.

While charities will have no choice but to throw unusable donations in the trash, there are services you can use to make your spring-cleaning eco-friendly, even for items you can't donate. For example, if you have torn or stained blue jeans, reach out to Blue Jeans Go Green. This program keeps denim out of landfills by turning it into insulation. And while Goodwill can't take your batteries or old flip phone, you can check out Call2Recycle.org to learn how to safely recycle your e-waste.

Your donations can be a big help to local charities. Just don't "donate" your garbage.