

STEPS TOWARD A HEALTHY HEART...

MAY BE THROUGH YOUR MOUTH

OPEN UP AND SAY AAAHH – WHY YOUR DOCTOR IS LOOKING FOR MORE THAN A HEALTHY SMILE

Your physician and dentist may be able to find clues about your overall health by looking into your mouth. Many people may not realize that good oral health may be important to their overall health, but emerging research suggests an association between severe gum disease and serious health conditions, such as heart disease and diabetes.



“I think people are surprised to learn that having poor oral health may affect their overall health, including their heart health,” says Dr. Lori Mosca, Director of New York-Presbyterian Hospital Preventive Cardiology Program and Professor of Medicine at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. “Even though more research is needed on the association between

oral health and heart health, people can take simple steps now, such as using an antibacterial toothpaste that also prevents gum inflammation, like Colgate Total, which may also benefit the heart.”

HOW CAN MY ORAL HEALTH POSSIBLY AFFECT MY HEART HEALTH?

Lack of proper oral care may lead to gingivitis. Gingivitis, an early form of gum disease and the first stage of gum inflammation, is caused by the build-up of plaque and bacteria above the gumline. If left untreated, gingivitis may develop into periodontitis, a more serious form of gum disease.



While the exact nature of the oral health/heart health relationship is unknown, Dr. Mosca says there are several theories as to how periodontitis might impact heart health. “One theory is that bacteria may enter the bloodstream through the mouth and have the potential to attach to fatty deposits in the blood vessels. Another is that the inflammation associated with periodontitis may play a role.”

GUM DISEASE: HOW COMMON IS IT?

Periodontal diseases are highly prevalent in the United States. It is estimated that approximately 80% of Americans have experienced some form of gum disease.

In a comprehensive study of American adults aged 30-90, approximately 50% exhibited bleeding gums, a sign of gingivitis or periodontitis.

Periodontitis has been shown to affect approximately 35% of adults with teeth, or about 36 million people in the United States.

WOMEN AND HEART DISEASE: A REAL CONCERN

Did you know that in 2003 alone, cardiovascular disease claimed the lives of more than 480,000 women, compared to 270,000 lives lost to all other cancers combined?

More women die each year of cardiovascular disease than men, a fact many women may not be thinking of when evaluating their overall health. Research indicates that 38% of women die within one year of a first recognized heart attack, while only 25% of men die within one year of a first recognized heart attack.

Yet, even with these numbers, recent research suggests that women are less likely to seek optimal cardiovascular preventive care.

WHO IS AT RISK FOR GUM DISEASE?

Without proper oral care at home and regular dental visits, gum inflammation can be a risk for everyone. If dental plaque is not routinely removed from the teeth, especially from the gum line, with proper brushing and flossing, it can lead to gingivitis which, if left untreated, can lead to periodontitis.

In addition, people with uncontrolled diabetes or women who are pregnant are at increased risk for developing gingivitis.

Periodontitis and heart health also have several risk factors in common, including:

- Increased Age
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Stress
- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Poor nutrition
- Socio-economic status

SIMPLE STEPS

WHAT CAN I DO TO MAINTAIN HEALTHY TEETH AND GUMS?

Here are some simple steps you can take to maintain good oral health, which may also benefit your overall health:

- Use a toothpaste with an antibacterial ingredient to help prevent gingivitis – a recommendation endorsed by the American Dental Association. Colgate Total is the only toothpaste both approved by the FDA and accepted by the ADA to help prevent and reduce gingivitis
- Brush for 2 minutes twice a day
- Floss daily
- Visit your dentist every 6 months



You should also keep your dentist informed of any other major health conditions you've been diagnosed with by a physician, such as heart disease or diabetes.

WANT MORE? HERE ARE SOME OTHER TIPS ON HOW YOU CAN HELP PROTECT YOUR HEART THROUGH WHAT YOU PUT IN YOUR MOUTH:

- Make a list of heart-healthy foods to pick up at the grocery store
- Cut up veggies and put them in snack size bags so you can easily grab them and go
- Read food labels and be sure to substitute saturated fats with unsaturated fats
- When going to a restaurant that you know has big portions, ask the waiter to put half of the dish in a to-go box before bringing out your meal in order to prevent you from overeating.
- Make regular visits with your doctor to have a check-up



WHAT ARE SOME QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOUR DENTIST AND DOCTOR?

1. How do I know that my mouth is healthy?
2. How will I know if I'm at risk for gum disease, such as periodontitis?
3. What are the signs of inflammation of the mouth and gums?
4. What can I do to prevent and reduce gum inflammation?
5. What else can I do to maintain good oral health, which may benefit my overall health?
6. Do I need to be evaluated for heart disease if I have gum disease?
7. Do I have any oral health conditions that may affect my overall health?
8. Do I have any overall health conditions that may affect my oral health?

NOTE: Colgate Total is FDA approved for the prevention of tooth decay, plaque and gingivitis, not approved for the prevention or treatment of periodontitis or other diseases, such as heart disease.

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