



Mouth Matters

Information to help keep your smile and your overall health the best they can be



The Mouth-Body Connection

Understand the importance of oral health — and its connection to your overall health.

Taking good care of your mouth, teeth and gums is a worthy goal in and of itself. Good oral and dental hygiene can help prevent bad breath, tooth decay and gum disease — and can help you keep your teeth as you get older.

Researchers are also discovering new reasons to brush and floss. A healthy mouth may help you ward off medical disorders. The flip side? An unhealthy mouth, especially if you have gum disease, may increase your risk of serious health problems such as heart attack, stroke, poorly controlled diabetes and preterm labor.

Many conditions cause oral signs and symptoms

Your mouth is a window into what's going on in the rest of your body, often serving as a helpful vantage point for detecting the early signs and symptoms of systemic disease — a disease that affects or pertains to your entire body, not just one of its parts. Systemic conditions such as AIDS or diabetes, for example, often first become apparent as mouth lesions or other oral problems. In fact, according to the Academy of General Dentistry, more than 90 percent of all systemic diseases produce oral signs and symptoms.

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Did you know?

There is compelling research indicating a strong connection between health problems — such as diabetes, heart disease, and pregnancy complications — with the presence of oral disease and infection.

define:

The word *periodontal* literally means “around the tooth.”

Also called gum disease, *periodontal disease* is a serious bacterial infection that destroys the gums and tissues surrounding the teeth. It begins when bacteria inflame the gums. If this inflammation is left untreated, the disease will progress and the underlying bone around the teeth will be destroyed.



The Absolute Tooth ...

By the time he was elected president, George Washington had only one tooth in his mouth. Instead, he had several sets of dentures, one of which had a tendency to fly out of his mouth.

They were made out of a conglomeration of elephant tusks and hippopotamus, walrus and cow teeth. And were connected by springs, so if he opened his mouth too wide too fast, they could pop right out!

continued from front ...

Periodontal Disease

Did you know there is compelling research indicating a strong connection between health problems — such as diabetes, heart disease, and pregnancy complications — with the presence of oral disease and infection? This means your dentist may be the first person to recognize disease and help you stop it in its tracks!

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Research now shows that disease-causing bacteria, including those that cause periodontal disease, can enter the circulatory system and contribute to diseases in other parts of the body. Researchers believe the more chronic and severe a person's periodontal infection is, the greater the risk for other infections in the body.¹

¹Oral health mirrors overall health. *Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) Impact*. April 2001.

²The oral systemic health connection. *National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research*, National Institutes of Health. May 1999; 1 – 16.

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Consider this:

- > Persons with certain types of diabetes **are three times more likely to develop periodontal disease than nondiabetic individuals.**²
- > Many studies indicate people **with a form of periodontitis are more likely to develop cardiovascular disease than individuals without periodontal infection. One study suggests the risk of fatal heart disease doubles for persons with severe periodontal disease.**²
- > Pregnant women with periodontal disease **are seven times more likely to have a preterm, low-birthweight baby.**²

The good news is that researchers also believe it is possible to help prevent or control the development of certain diseases in some people by treating their periodontal disease.¹ This means maintaining good oral health has never been more important — or the advantages more real!

A compelling case for good habits

If you didn't already have enough reasons to take good care of your mouth, teeth and gums, the relationship between your oral health and your overall health provides even more. Resolve to practice good oral hygiene everyday. You're making an investment in your overall health, not just for now, but for the future, too.



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