

# The Oral & Overall Health Connection



## Consider the Consequences

Periodontal disease is known to trigger the body's inflammation response and adversely affect a number of different organs.



### 1. The Brain

Gum disease carries a stronger risk for stroke than diabetes. Research has found that the impact of gum disease is almost equivalent to high blood pressure, which is a major cause of strokes.



### 2. The Heart

Those with gum disease are almost twice as likely to suffer from heart disease compared to those with healthy gums.



### 3. The Lungs

Poor oral health may worsen respiratory illnesses by promoting the growth of harmful bacteria that can be transported to the lungs. Periodontal disease may increase the risk of pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and bronchitis.



### 4. The Pancreas

Research suggests a significant association between gum disease and pancreatic cancer.



### 5. The Kidneys

The leading cause of tooth loss in adults is periodontal disease. And, edentulism, the condition of being toothless, is closely associated with chronic kidney disease.

**Other Health Concerns:** Periodontal disease is a cause for concern for pregnant women and diabetics. Expecting mothers who have gum disease are said to be four to seven times more likely to have a baby that is born too early or too small. Nearly 95 percent of Americans who have diabetes also have periodontal disease. Studies strongly suggest that this disease has the ability to disrupt blood sugar levels.



A distinct connection exists between the health of your mouth and that of your body.

Research shows more than 120 illnesses can be identified in the mouth through a dental exam, including osteoporosis, bulimia, diabetes and oral cancer. Even more importantly, an unhealthy mouth can have harmful effects on the heart, kidneys, lungs, pancreas and brain.



## Understand the Underlying Issue

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly one out of two Americans, 30 years of age or older, has periodontal disease. This translates to 64.7 million individuals with a mild, moderate or severe form of this gum condition.

Periodontal disease is a chronic bacterial infection that affects your gums and the bone supporting your teeth. It can occur for many reasons, including poor hygiene, unhealthy diet, smoking and stress.

Early gum disease, known as gingivitis, is characterized by red, swollen, bleeding gums. In this milder form of the disease, only the gums are affected. At this stage, the condition is treated with a proper oral health regime and regular dental visits. Gingivitis is usually reversible.

In the later stage of the disease, called periodontitis, gums are seriously damaged. Gums begin to pull away from the teeth, and supporting bone may be lost. This stage is irreversible and could require surgical treatments.



## Proactively Protect Your Oral & Overall Health

Maintaining good oral health practices is essential to keeping your natural teeth strong and healthy as you age.

Establishing and maintaining good oral health is essential to your overall health and wellness. To prevent gum disease, be sure to:

- Brush at least twice a day (morning and evening) with fluoride toothpaste
- Floss gently once a day
- Drink fluoridated water
- Eat wisely and limit sugary snacks and drinks
- Avoid tobacco and limit alcohol
- Visit your dentist twice a year

Sources: Academy of General Dentistry, American Dental Association, American College of Prosthodontists, Centers for Disease Control, Dental Management of the Medically Compromised Patient (7th ed.).

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