

What Happens in Your Mouth...

Doesn't Always Stay in Your Mouth.

Research has shown that there may be an association between periodontal disease and other chronic inflammatory conditions, such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes, among others. Scientists believe that inflammation may be the cause behind the link between periodontal disease and other chronic conditions. Inflammation is the body's reaction to fight off infection, guard against injury, or shield against irritation. Initially, it intends to have a protective effect, but left untreated, chronic inflammation can lead to the destruction of affected tissues, which can lead to more serious health conditions.

- **[Cardiovascular Disease](#)**

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is one of the leading killers of men and women each year. Research has shown that inflammation is a major risk factor for developing CVD, and that people with periodontal disease may have an increased risk for CVD. Though more research is needed to better understand the connection between periodontal disease and CVD, don't be surprised if your dentist asks you about your heart health or if your cardiologist or physician asks you about your periodontal health.

- **[Diabetes](#)**

Periodontal disease can be a complication of diabetes. Researchers have found that people with poorly controlled Type 2 diabetes are more likely to develop periodontal disease. However, the risk isn't just one way; people with periodontal disease may find it more difficult to control their blood sugar levels, which can increase the risk for diabetic complications. If you are living with diabetes, it is crucial that you pay close attention to your periodontal health.

- **[Pregnancy Complications](#)**

Studies have shown that women with periodontal disease may be at an increased risk of pregnancy complications, such as delivering a preterm or low birth weight baby. More research is needed to determine the exact relationship, but expectant mothers should consider having a periodontal evaluation to ensure that their periodontal health is at its best.

- **[Respiratory Diseases](#)**

Research has suggested that bacteria found in the mouth can be drawn into the respiratory tract and cause an inflammatory response in the lungs, commonly known as pneumonia. In addition, periodontal disease may also worsen existing chronic lung conditions. Anyone with lung or respiratory problems should consider a complete oral health examination to determine if gum disease is present.

Dental Disease is Preventable

The good news is that dental disease is preventable. You can practice preventive dentistry on yourself by adopting these healthy habits:

- Always remember to brush your teeth twice a day
- Floss between teeth once a day
- Eat a balanced diet and limit between-meal snacks
- Schedule regular dental visits

By following a healthy dental routine and making smart food choices, you can lower your risk for tooth decay.

Brushing

Brushing your teeth is the cornerstone of any good oral hygiene routine. To keep your teeth and gums healthy, always be sure to brush your teeth twice a day with a soft-bristled brush. The size and shape of your brush should fit your mouth allowing you to reach all areas easily. Also, don't forget to replace your toothbrush every three or four months or sooner if the bristles are frayed. A worn toothbrush won't do a good job of cleaning your teeth. Finally, make sure to use an ADA-accepted fluoride toothpaste. It makes no difference whether you choose a manual or powered toothbrush—just make sure to brush twice a day, every day!

Flossing

Flossing goes hand in hand with brushing. By flossing once a day, you help to remove plaque from between your teeth in areas where the toothbrush can't reach. This is extremely important because plaque that is not removed by brushing and flossing can eventually harden into calculus or tartar. Once tartar has formed, it can only be removed by a professional cleaning.

Even if you have no teeth, such as those with dentures, you still need to see a dentist for regular oral inspections. And, if you already have diseases such as diabetes, you will need to see your dentist more frequently, depending on your medication and oral health. Healthy teeth and gums are vital to good nutrition and overall health.

For more information: www.ADA.org, www.cdc.gov, www.heart.org, or www.doctorsdirecthealthcare.net.

Please see our website for more information: www.doctorsdirecthealthcare.net or you can call us at 1-877-503-0388.