Healthy Smiles, Healthy Hearts

Taking good care of your teeth and gums may be a key factor to good heart health.

Studies have shown that both periodontal (gum) disease and heart disease have similar underlying causes including age, tobacco use, genetics, stress, medications, poor nutrition and obesity.[1]

However, another factor is the buildup of dental plaque over time. Gingivitis, an early stage of gum disease, occurs when bacteria in the mouth grow into plaque, causing inflammation and bleeding in the gums.[1] When left untreated, the plaque can spread below the gum line, allowing bacteria to enter the bloodstream. Due to the inflammation and the spread of bacteria into the bloodstream, it's believed that there is an increased risk for other systemic diseases such as heart disease.[2]



But here's the good news! You can reduce your risk of heart disease and periodontal disease by simply practicing good oral health habits every day. Regular brushing, flossing and dental visits are more important than ever for your mouth, heart and general overall wellness.

Did you know?

More than 70 percent of Americans, 65 and older, have periodontitis (an advanced stage of gingivitis).[1]

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Quick bites

Talk to your dentist if you notice any of these indicators of gum disease:

- Gums that bleed easily
- Red, swollen, tender gums
- Gums that have pulled away from the teeth
- Persistent bad breath or bad taste in the mouth
- Permanent teeth that are loose or separating
- Any change in the way the teeth fit together when biting
- Any change in the fit of partial dentures

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1. American Academy of Periodontology, "Gum Disease and Heart Disease," web. **2.** Van Dyke, TE and van Winkelhoff, AJ, "Infection and Inflammatory Mechanisms," *Journal of Clinical Periodontology* 40, suppl. 14 (2013): S1–S7.

Healthy Smile, Happy Life

Delta Dental of Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, and Tennessee

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