



A HEALTHY MOUTH ORAL HEALTH-OVERALL HEALTH CONNECTION

Having good oral health can help against bad breath, tooth decay, and gum disease. A healthy mouth enables not only nutrition of the physical body, but also enhances social interaction and promotes self-esteem and feelings of well-being. It's important to understand the connection between oral health and overall health so you know how you can maintain a healthy mouth and body.

Oral Health-Overall Health Connection



We all know the importance of maintaining your smile. Bright, clean teeth are aesthetically pleasing. But, more importantly, a healthy mouth can ward off a host of life-threatening medical conditions. When you don't take care of your teeth, you're prone to gum disease, which increases your risk of such conditions.

That's why it's so important to brush and floss regularly, and to get your annual dental check-ups. Poor oral hygiene allows plaque to build up along your gum line. This causes bacteria to accumulate between your teeth and gums, causing an infection known as, gingivitis. And, untreated gingivitis can lead to an even more serious gum infection, periodontitis or gum disease.

If your gums get to this point, bacteria can enter your bloodstream. Oral bacteria in your bloodstream can cause an infection in another part of your body to develop—which puts your health at risk.

Common Conditions Caused by Poor Oral Health



- **Cardiovascular conditions.** Inflammation of the gums may play a role in clogged arteries, as well as blood clots. It seems that bacteria in the mouth may cause inflammation in the arteries, leading to build up of plaque. This increases your risk of a heart attack or stroke.
- **Diabetes.** Poor oral health doesn't cause diabetes, but it can cause complications. Those with diabetes have to be very careful about controlling their blood sugar levels. Gum disease puts them at risk for infection that can cause insulin resistance and poor control over blood sugar.
- **Preterm birth.** Gum disease increases risk of preterm, low birth weight delivery. In fact, research shows that approximately 18 percent of preterm, low birth weight babies born in the United States annually may be caused by oral infections. It's believed that oral bacteria release toxins, which can enter the placenta through the mother's bloodstream. This affects the growth and development of the fetus.

Giving your mouth the same attention, you give the rest of your body can really pay off in the long run. Be sure to brush and floss daily to avoid the above health risks.

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