



# The Health of your Smile: Why it matters and how it impacts on your general health.

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**Did you know that periodontal disease, a chronic inflammatory disease, is linked to other serious health risks? Scientific data has now proven that there is a direct link between oral health (how healthy your teeth and gums are) and total body health.**

Infections in the mouth can play havoc elsewhere in the body. For many years bacteria was believed to be the factor that linked periodontal disease to other infections in the body. However, similarly new research demonstrates that inflammation may link periodontal disease to other chronic conditions.

The bacteria associated with periodontal disease can travel into the blood stream and pose a threat to other parts of the body—thus worsening the effects of health issues such as respiratory infections, heart disease and even osteoporosis. As such, managing periodontal disease may directly affect the management of a range of conditions. Perhaps more importantly, disregarding periodontal disease can exacerbate other chronic conditions to the extent that it may be fatal.

## What can I do to reduce the health risks associated with gum disease?

If you value your oral health, you will value your overall health. Considering this, it is important to take note of any symptoms of gum disease, as it can lead to a host of related health problems. Sometimes the only way to detect gum disease is through a thorough periodontal evaluation.

## Health issues?

Ongoing research is showing that periodontal disease may be linked to heart disease, diabetes, respiratory disease and osteoporosis. The bacteria associated with periodontal disease can travel into the blood stream and pose a threat to other parts of the body. Healthy gums may lead to a healthier body.

## What are the symptoms of gum disease?

- Gums that bleed easily, such as during brushing or flossing
- Red, swollen or tender gums
- Gums that have pulled away from the teeth
- Persistent bad breath
- Pus between the teeth and gums
- Loose or separating teeth
- A change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite
- A sore or irritation in your mouth that does not get better within two weeks

## Thinking of becoming pregnant?

Pregnant women who have periodontal disease may be seven times more likely to have a baby born prematurely and under the healthy weight range. In addition, about half of women experience "pregnancy gingivitis". However, women who have good oral hygiene and have no gingivitis before pregnancy are very unlikely to experience this condition.

## Does a family member have periodontal disease?

Research suggests that the bacteria that cause periodontal disease can pass through saliva. This means the common contact of saliva in families puts children and couples at risk of contracting the periodontal disease of another family member.

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