



Heart Disease and Oral Health

Maintaining good oral hygiene could benefit your heart. Several studies reveal a link between periodontal (gum) disease and an increased risk for heart disease.

Gum disease can occur without warning signs and can be painless. Talk to your dentist if you notice any of these symptoms:



Gums that bleed easily.



Red, swollen and tender gums.



Gums that have pulled away from teeth.



Persistent bad breath or bad taste in the mouth.



Permanent teeth that are loose or separating.



Any change in the way teeth fit together when biting.



Any change in the fit of partial dentures.

New research shows a correlation between early indicators of gum disease and **atherosclerosis**, a condition in which plaque builds up inside the arteries and causes coronary artery disease. Atherosclerosis accounts for 370,000 deaths annually and affects about 13 million Americans.¹ **Researchers have found that gum disease plays a role in blood vessel dysfunction**, a condition that improves with intensive periodontal treatment. This may include scaling and root planing, locally administered antibiotics or tooth extraction.²



Research confirms that dental benefits continue to play an important part in maintaining overall health. Regular brushing, flossing and dental checkups are important for your heart and general wellness. **Since heart disease is the leading cause of death for Americans, be sure to brush up to keep your heart healthy!**

¹New England Journal of Medicine: <http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/short/356/9/911>. ²The American Heart Association: <http://www.americaheart.org>.