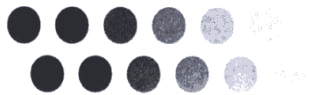


FACTSHEET



Periodontal Disease and Heart Disease

Infective endocarditis is a condition characterized by inflammation of the interior lining of the heart and the heart valves, generally caused by bacterial infection. Heart valves that have been damaged or are abnormal are at highest risk for infective endocarditis, but infection can also occur in normal valves when a large number of bacteria are present. Researchers believe that when an individual is diagnosed with periodontal disease, a normal task such as chewing or brushing can injure gum tissue, allowing bacteria to enter the bloodstream. The accumulation of these bacteria on heart valves often leads to a fatal infection unless treated.

Coronary artery disease is another type of cardiovascular disease in which the walls of the coronary arteries (heart blood vessels) gradually thicken due to the build-up of fatty proteins. Often blood clots form in these narrowed coronary arteries and normal blood flow activity is obstructed, depleting the heart of the nutrients and oxygen needed to function properly. Scientists now believe that bacteria found in the oral cavity enter the bloodstream, attach to fatty plaques and may contribute to clot formation. Researchers have found that people suffering from periodontal disease are twice as likely to suffer from coronary artery disease than those without periodontal disease. Current data leads scientists to believe that periodontal disease is an important risk factor for heart disease, working in concert with other risk factors such as age, smoking, diabetes, hypertension and elevated blood cholesterol¹⁻¹².

Additionally, in a recent study that looked at the causal relationship of oral infection as a risk factor for stroke, people diagnosed with acute cerebrovascular ischemia were found more likely to have an oral infection when compared to those in a control group¹⁰.

The American Heart Association estimates approximately 58 million Americans, 1 in 5, suffer from cardiovascular disease, making it the number one cause of death in the U.S.



The American
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Periodontology

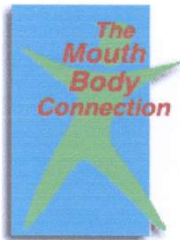
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American Academy of Periodontology

The following information from the AAP Web site is located at:
<http://www.perio.org/consumer/mbc.heart.htm>

Heart Disease and Stroke



- Osteoporosis
- Heart Disease and Stroke
- Pregnancy Problems
- Diabetes
- Respiratory Diseases

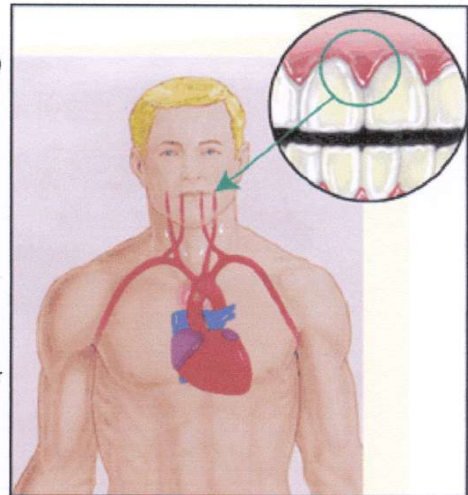
Heart Disease

Several theories exist to explain the link between periodontal disease and heart disease. One theory is that oral bacteria can affect the heart when they enter the blood stream, attaching to fatty plaques in the coronary arteries (heart blood vessels) and contributing to clot formation. Coronary artery disease is characterized by a thickening of the walls of the coronary arteries due to the buildup of fatty proteins. Blood clots can obstruct normal blood flow, restricting the amount of nutrients and oxygen required for the heart to function properly. This may lead to heart attacks.

Another possibility is that the inflammation caused by periodontal disease increases plaque build up, which may contribute to swelling of the arteries.

Researchers have found that people with periodontal disease are almost twice as likely to suffer from coronary artery disease as those without periodontal disease.

Periodontal disease can also exacerbate existing heart conditions. Patients at risk for infective endocarditis may require antibiotics prior to dental procedures. Your periodontist and cardiologist will be able to determine if your heart condition requires use of antibiotics prior to dental procedures.



Stroke

Additional studies have pointed to a relationship between periodontal disease and stroke. In one study that looked at the causal relationship of oral infection as a risk factor for stroke, people diagnosed with acute cerebrovascular ischemia were found more likely to have an oral infection when compared to those in the control group.

Find Out More

AAP Statements and Press Releases

- [Deep Periodontal Pockets Increase Risk for Electrocardiographic Abnormalities](#)
- [Periodontal Disease, C-Reactive Protein and Overall Health](#)
- [Why Periodontal Disease May Pose a Risk to Your Health \(Video News Release 7/9/98\)](#)
- [New Study Confirms Periodontal Disease Linked to Heart Disease \(2/7/02\)](#)
- [C-Reactive Protein - A Predictor of Heart Disease - Is Elevated in Patients with Periodontal Disease \(9/20/01\)](#)
- [The Mouth Is the Mirror to Overall Health \(8/15/00\)](#)

Consumer Information

- [Do You Have Periodontal Disease? Take the Test](#)
- [Locate a periodontist near you for an evaluation](#)