

## Is there a link between gum diseases and heart problems?

Written by Media Release

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August 25, 2014: The American Dental Association ADA has carried out a lot of studies exploring the relationship between dental diseases and heart problems. According to Sally Cram, the spokesperson for ADA, many studies suggest there is a connection between oral health and heart ailments. The evidence of relationship is not exactly clear, but the findings definitely link gum diseases and heart problems.

People who have gum diseases are twice as likely to have heart problems as people who do not have oral health issues. According to American academy of Periodontology, people who have oral problems like gingivitis, cavities, and missing teeth, are likely to be at a high risk for developing heart trouble later on.

Desvarieux published a paper on his research at the University of Columbia in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*. The study was on 657 people who did not have known heart problems. Desvarieux and his team found that people who have disease causing bacteria in the mouth were also prone to having atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) in the carotid artery in the neck. A clogged carotid artery is one of the primary causes for stroke.

Oral bacteria enters the blood stream

The exact link between oral bacteria and heart disease is not yet understood. But we do know that the bacteria in the mouth enter blood stream through infected gums caused by gingivitis.

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These same bacteria have been found in artery plaques. Some experts believe that these bacteria stick to the fatty plaques in the arteries causing them to clog.

According to another theory, the defense mechanism in the body gets triggered in the body when these oral bacteria enter blood stream. The blood cells inflame in response resulting in clogging the arteries.

A study published in the European Journal of Preventive Cardiology summarized self-reported dental health involving 15000 people from 39 countries.

It was based on the reports provided by 15000 patients who had chronic heart conditions. They were asked to fill in a questionnaire which provided data on their oral health. The questions included the number of remaining teeth, and frequency of gum disease. The results were surprising.

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It was found that higher education was related to better dental hygiene. Smoking and diabetes was reported less with people who had better oral health.

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Less teeth or greater teeth loss was reported with people who had higher rate of cardiovascular disease.

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Less number of teeth was also associated with higher blood pressure, high level of bad cholesterol and heart disease.

Prevention of heart disease through oral health

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According to ADA, it is important for everyone to take good care of their teeth because it may help ward off several heart conditions. People must proactively make an effort to look after their teeth and gums, and this is especially important for people who already have heart problems.

Experts also say that if you happen to have periodontal disease, you must not ignore it, but [consult a dentist immediately](#)

. In most cases, simply learning the correct way to brush and floss the teeth may be enough to keep teeth problems at bay. People with more advanced periodontal disease should get root planning or deep cleaning of the root, and scaling or surgery.

The best advice any expert can give to reduce risk of heart problems due to oral health is to use common sense and stick to the basics. That is, keep your mouth clean at all times. A clean mouth makes it difficult for the bacteria to colonize and thrive. It also eliminates bad breath, and gives you healthier gums and a brighter smile.

A little prevention goes a long way. Regular brushing and flossing can not only prevent cavities but also reduce the risk of more serious cardiovascular problems.