

What is the Oral Systemic Link?

It's frequently said that the mouth is the gateway to the body. More and more, dental and medical professionals have been discovering just how true this really is. This is referred to as the **oral-systemic link**.

Dentists can often be the first to detect conditions such as Crohn's disease, diabetes, or cancer because the early symptoms may first show up in the mouth. Going in the other direction, we are learning more and more how what happens in your mouth affects the health of the rest of your body. The brain has the blood-brain barrier which protects it from

toxins in the blood. Similarly, in our mouths, there is a barrier between our gums/teeth and the rest of our body. With gum disease, this barrier can break down and the bacteria that cause periodontal disease are passing into the bloodstream and are being found in different areas around the body.



STROKE

People with gum disease are three times as likely to die from a stroke.



DIABETES

Diabetes and bleeding gums increase your risk of premature death by 400-700%. Inflammation from periodontal disease has an effect on the body's ability to regulate blood sugar levels. High blood sugar levels provide an environment that can make gum infections more likely.



RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

Research has found an association between gum disease and rheumatoid arthritis. People with RA are eight times more likely to develop gum disease than those without RA.



SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE

Gum disease has been linked to preeclampsia, low birth weight, fertility issues, and erectile dysfunction.



ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Research shows those with chronic periodontal disease for more than 10 years have a 70% higher risk.



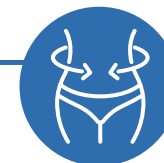
RESPIRATORY DISEASE

Poor oral hygiene can increase the risk for pneumonia and respiratory infections.



HEART DISEASE

People with gum disease are two times as likely to die from a heart attack. Chronic, long-term infection in the body, such as from gum disease, can lead to narrowing or blockages in the blood vessels, which can lead to a heart attack or stroke.



OBESITY

Being obese can significantly increase the risk of periodontal disease.



OSTEOPOROSIS

Studies show a significant connection between periodontal disease and osteoporosis, especially in women.



CANCER

Men and women with a history of gum disease are 14% more likely to develop cancer than those with healthy gums, with increased inflammation being the likely connection. Cancers where an increase has been found include: pancreatic (54% increase), kidney (49% increase), blood (30% increase), breast, prostate, and colon cancers.

TO PROTECT YOUR ORAL HEALTH, PRACTICE GOOD ORAL HYGIENE DAILY.

- Brush teeth for two minutes, twice a day with a soft-bristled brush using fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss daily.
- Eat a healthy diet and limit food with added sugars.
- Replace your toothbrush every three months, or sooner if bristles are splayed or worn.
- Schedule regular dental checkups and cleanings.
- Avoid tobacco use.

In addition to regular visits, contact your dentist as soon as an oral health problem arises. Taking care of your oral health is an investment in your overall health.