

Heart Healthy Habits

THE LINK between your gums and heart



Did you know that people with periodontal (gum) disease may be more at risk for heart disease and strokes? Bacteria and its byproducts from the gum tissues may enter the blood stream, and cause small blood clots that may contribute to the clogging of arteries. The inflammation caused by gum disease may also contribute to the buildup of fatty deposits inside heart arteries.

Prevention is in your hands

Unfortunately, heart disease was the leading cause of death in the U.S. in 2011.¹ Fortunately, there is something you can do to help reduce your risk of gum disease — brush and floss every day.

Also, be sure to visit your dentist for an exam and cleaning twice a year, or as your dentist recommends, because gum disease may not be that noticeable. If plaque is not removed each day by brushing and flossing, it hardens into a rigid mineralized substance called tartar, or calculus. Even if you think you're doing a good job flossing, plaque can still remain in your mouth. Only a dental professional can remove the tartar and plaque you may miss at home.

Simple solutions for heart-healthy gums:

- Brush twice a day
- Floss once a day, preferably at night, because brushing doesn't clean between teeth
- Get regular dental check-ups

Warning signs you may have gum disease:

- Red, swollen or tender gums
- Bleeding while brushing or flossing
- Gums that pull away from the teeth and/or loose or separating teeth
- Persistent bad breath

Among obese Americans aged 18-34, gum disease was 76% more common than when compared with normal weight individuals in that age group.²



1. cdc.gov, Division of Vital Statistics
http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr61/nvsr61_06.pdf
2. jada.ada.org/content/134/7/826.3.full, by J Coro - 2003

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