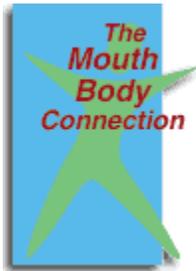


Gum Disease Links to Heart Disease and Stroke

November 13, 2010



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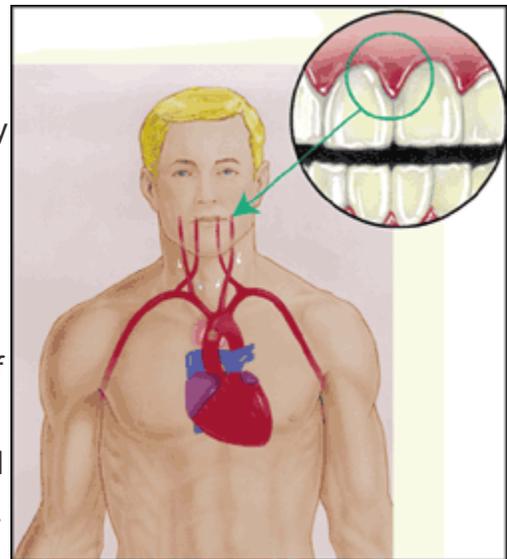
Heart Disease

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.

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AAP Oral Health Information on Gum Disease

- [AAP Press Releases on the Link Between Periodontal Disease and Heart Disease](#)
 - [Types of Periodontal Disease](#)
 - [Causes of Periodontal Disease](#)
 - [What's Your Periodontal Disease Risk? Take AAP's Self-Test](#)
 - [Locate a Periodontist Near You for an Evaluation](#)
- [Video News Release: Why Periodontal Disease May Pose a Risk to Your Health](#)
 - [Treatments for Periodontal Disease](#)
- [Encias Sanas y Cuerpo Sano/Enfermedad periodontal - Hoja informativa \(*Article in Spanish*\)](#)