



HealthyPeople • Dental

Is there a link between periodontal disease and cardiovascular disease?

Researchers and government agencies continue to investigate the possible relationship between periodontal disease and cardiovascular disease. Some studies have shown that bacteria in the mouth that are involved in the development of periodontal disease can move into the bloodstream and cause an elevation in C-reactive protein, a marker for inflammation in the blood vessels. These changes can, in turn, increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.

There is research to both support and refute the possible link between periodontal disease and cardiovascular disease, and more studies are needed to see how the two may be linked. Regardless of the relationship, maintaining optimal oral hygiene is an important component of your overall health.



THE BENEFITS OF PROPER ORAL CARE

You can reduce the chance of developing dental decay, gum inflammation, and oral infections such as abscess formation by taking good care of your teeth and gums.

Optimal dental care includes:

- Seeking professional dental care every six months
- Brushing your teeth a minimum of twice daily
- Regularly flossing your teeth
- Making sure dentures fit properly

If you have cardiovascular disease, what should you tell your dentist?

First, make sure you give your dentist a complete medical history and list of the names and dosages of all the drugs you are taking for your cardiovascular condition (as well as any other prescription or nonprescription drugs you might be taking). This will help your dentist determine the best treatment for you, including medication selection for dental procedures.



Second, make sure to give your dentist the name and phone number of your doctor(s) in case your dentist needs to speak to him or her about your care.

Third, if you are particularly nervous about undergoing a dental procedure because you believe your stress, worry, and fears could make your cardiovascular condition worse, talk with your dentist. He or she can provide you with information and work with you on strategies to control dental pain and ease your fears.

If you have cardiovascular disease and need oral surgery, you should talk to your dentist or surgeon about plans for pain control during and after surgery, including the use of anesthetics and sedation.