

Health Bytes, Feb. 26, 2010

Gum Disease and Your Health

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The health of your mouth can predict the health of your body, so you need to take good care of your teeth.

Over 90% of diseases can show up in your mouth first. Your dentist can perform a Periodontal Screening and Recording (PSR) to screen you for periodontal disease, also known as gum disease. Periodontal disease is an infection of the tissue that surrounds and supports your teeth. Unfortunately, the effects of gum disease have been associated with:

Heart disease and stroke -- Bacteria from your mouth can contribute to clogged arteries and blood clots.

Uncontrolled blood sugar -- People with diabetes are more likely to get mouth infections and gum disease. Oral infections make it harder to control blood sugar levels.

Pneumonia -- If you have lung problems, the bacteria from your mouth and throat can be drawn into your lungs and lead to pneumonia.

Bone health -- Regular dental exams and X-rays can detect bone loss in your mouth that allows bacteria to cause gum detachment and tooth loss.

Cancer risk -- Mouth cancer, if found early, can be treated and stopped from spreading to the rest of the body.

Tips to Keep a Healthy Mouth:

Brush your teeth at least twice a day (use a toothbrush approved by the American Dental Association).

Use fluoride toothpaste.

Floss at least once a day.

See your dentist at least once a year for a good cleaning and exam.

Avoid tobacco, alcohol and carbonated beverages to reduce wear and tear on your teeth.

Good dental care can decrease your risk for gum disease and save you money on dental costs and medical care. A study of the *Journal of Periodontology* revealed health care costs over time were 21% higher for persons with severe gum disease than for those without gum problems.

Source: American Dental Association