

# Heart Disease and Oral Health

Explore the link between your oral health and heart health



Claiming around 610,000 lives each year, heart disease is the No. 1 killer of both men and women in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> Did you know that research has found a link between this deadly disease and the health of your gums?

- Having gum disease increases the risk of a first heart attack by 28%, according to a 2016 study.<sup>2</sup>
- Treating gum disease can go a long way toward lessening the impact of coronary artery disease (CAD), according to a 2014 study in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.<sup>3</sup> Patients who were treated for gum disease had lower medical costs and fewer hospitalizations for CAD.
- Inflammation caused by periodontal disease may be responsible for the connection.<sup>4</sup>

The two conditions also have some of the same risk factors, including smoking, poor nutrition and diabetes.



## Did you know?

Managing gum disease can improve your cardiovascular health.

<sup>1</sup> Underlying cause of death, 1999-2015 request. <https://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Rydén L. Response by Rydén to Letter Regarding Article, "Periodontitis Increases the Risk of a First Myocardial Infarction: A Report From the PAROKRANK Study". *Circulation*. 2016;134(1):e2.

<sup>3</sup> Jeffcoat M, Jeffcoat R, Gladowski P, Bramson J, Blum J. Impact of periodontal therapy on general health: Evidence from insurance data for five systemic conditions. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 2014;47(2):166-74. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24953519>.

<sup>4</sup> Saini et al. Periodontal diseases: A risk factor to cardiovascular disease. *Ann Card Anaesth* 2010;13:159-61.



## Prevention is the best medicine

Regular healthy habits can lower your risk of both gum disease and heart disease. And, if you already have one or both of these conditions, these strategies can help reduce their impact.

- **Brush and floss regularly.** To remove plaque-forming bacteria, brush for at least two minutes, twice a day, and don't skip the floss.
- **Choose a healthy diet,** rich in essential nutrients (especially vitamins A and C). Reduce sugar and starches.
- **Avoid cigarettes and smokeless tobacco.** These habits can destroy your gums and increase your chance of heart disease.
- **Visit the dentist** for regular cleanings and exams. Your dentist can identify signs of systemic illness and catch gum disease early on. Always tell your dentist your medical history, current conditions and any medications you're taking.

