



# It's All Connected.

Inflammation from gum disease can increase your risk of other diseases

Your mouth helps you to speak, eat a wide variety of foods and is important for your self-confidence and overall well-being. Untreated dental disease can lead to pain and infection. People with dental pain may have difficulty chewing and digesting food. They may have trouble sleeping, and their self-esteem and social life may be affected.

Although researchers are just beginning to uncover this relationship, increasing evidence shows a connection between oral health and general health and well-being. Periodontal disease – or disease of the gums and supporting bone – has been linked to several diseases including:

## Diabetes

There is a strong link between gum disease and diabetes. People with diabetes are not only more at risk of gum disease, but gum disease can also affect the severity of their diabetes.<sup>1</sup>

## Respiratory illness

The same bacteria found in plaque can also be inhaled into the lungs where they may cause an infection or aggravate any existing lung condition, especially in older adults.<sup>1</sup>

## Pre-term, low birth weight babies

Studies are also examining whether pregnant women with gum disease may be at a higher risk of delivering pre-term, low birth weight babies than women without gum disease.<sup>1</sup>

## Cardiovascular disease

There is new research that points to a possible connection between gum disease and heart disease and stroke.<sup>1</sup>

## Cognitive decline

A 2018 study demonstrated a statistically significant association between prevalence of periodontitis (gum inflammation) and cognitive decline in older adults.<sup>2</sup>

## Cancer

Researchers found that men with gum disease were 49% more likely to develop kidney cancer, 54% more likely to develop pancreatic cancer, and 30% more likely to develop blood cancers.<sup>3</sup>

Brushing twice daily, flossing, eating a balanced diet and visiting your dentist regularly can benefit your oral and overall health. Talk to your dentist about any health-related concerns, and always keep them up to date on any changes to your health and medications you may be taking.

For more information on maintaining good oral health and to learn more about the connection between oral disease and other illnesses, talk to your dentist and visit [yourdentalhealth.ca](http://yourdentalhealth.ca)

### References:

1. Health Canada. *Smile: Healthy Teeth, Healthy Body* (2009)
2. Journal of Clinical Periodontology. *Longitudinal evaluation of periodontitis and development of cognitive decline among older adults* (2018)
3. American Academy of Periodontology website (*Gum Disease and Other Systemic Diseases*)

