

## Periodontal Disease & Heart Health Linked



Periodontal disease is an infection that destroys the periodontal tissues. It breaks down the gum surrounding your teeth as well as the supporting bone that holds your teeth in place.

Researchers have found that people with periodontal (gum) disease are about twice as likely to suffer from heart disease as people with healthy gums. Studies are now indicating that the most common bacterial strain in dental plaque may cause blood clots when it enters the blood stream. The chronic inflammation of the gums that is associated with periodontal disease is one path that allows this bacteria to enter the blood stream.

A recent study links gum disease to heart disease as strongly as the link of heart disease to cholesterol, body weight, or smoking.

### Occurrence of Periodontal Disease

More than half of people over the age of 18 have at least early stages of periodontal disease and 3 out of 4 people over the age of 35 are affected to some degree.

## Other Health Concerns Related to Gum Disease

Bacteria in plaque are associated with other health concerns than just heart disease, some of which can be life threatening. More research is linking periodontal disease to many health issues.

Some additional associated health concerns are:

- \* Tooth Loss
- \* Infective endocarditis can occur in patients with certain heart conditions or artificial joints. It is a potentially fatal infection of the inner lining of the heart.
- \* A weakened immune system
- \* Respiratory infections - people with chronic lung disease are at higher risk of developing respiratory infections
- \* Increased risk of delivering preterm infants with low birth weights

## American Dental Association Warning Signs of Periodontal Disease

- \* gums that bleed when you brush your teeth
- \* red, swollen or tender gums
- \* gums that have pulled away from the teeth
- \* bad breath that doesn't go away
- \* pus between your teeth and gums
- \* permanent teeth that are loose
- \* change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite
- \* change in the fit of partial dentures

## Prevention Recommended by The ADA

- \* Brush your teeth thoroughly at least twice a day
- \* Clean between your teeth everyday with floss or interdental cleaners
- \* Eat a balanced diet and limit snacking between meals
- \* Have regular dental checkups and professional cleanings

To help lower your risks for many health concerns, it is important to keep your regular care appointments with your dental professionals.



For additional information, visit the American Dental Association at [www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)