

Can brushing your teeth prevent a Heart Attack?

GUM DISEASE HAS MANY ADVERSE AFFECTS.

But they may not be associated with the mouth only. Research has shown that participants with severe periodontal (gum) disease have been shown to be two times as likely to have a fatal heart attack and three times as likely to have a stroke compared to patients without periodontal disease. The bacteria that cause gum disease may also play a role in heart health.

Several theories exist to explain the

may block normal blood flow and nutrients and oxygen needed for the heart to function properly. This in turn may lead to heart problems.

Another theory is the inflammation caused by periodontal disease itself increases the fatty deposit buildup and may contribute to the swelling of the arteries, again leading to a potential heart attack.

Periodontal disease has been called the "silent" disease. Many people have it

gums, persistent bad breath or bad taste and loose teeth in the more advanced stages.

Periodontal disease can no longer be considered exclusively a dental disease or localized infection, since it can now be associated with these other systematic diseases even though more research is needed to clarify the exact relationship. In the meantime, it makes sense for everyone to make a special effort to prevent oral health problems. This is especially

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relationship between periodontal disease and heart disease. One theory suggests that the bacteria of the mouth enter the bloodstream through inflamed and bleeding gums that are always associated with periodontal disease. When gums are inflamed, the barrier that prevents blood from coming into the mouth and bacteria from entering the bloodstream is weakened. Conversely, the healthier the gums, the stronger the barrier. If bacteria do get into the bloodstream, they attach to fatty deposits in the coronary arteries, the blood vessels that supply the heart muscle itself. This can contribute to clot formation. The blood clots that can form

and do not know they have it until the progression of the disease may be in the latter, much harder to treat stage. Periodontal disease is an infection that destroys the gums and the surrounding bone that supports the teeth. Unlike most infections that give us early warning signs, gum disease progresses silently and usually without pain. This is even true for the late stages of the disease. The statistics are startling! More than on half of all people over the age of 18 have at least the early stages of periodontal disease. After the age of 35, three out of four people are affected to some degree. Don't ignore the warning signs: red bleeding or swollen

true for people who are already at a higher risk of developing heart disease.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" has never rang more true. In other words, a little prevention can go a long way and now it had been shown that by using your toothbrush and floss, you may also be taking steps to prevent a much more serious problem in the future. Call your dentist today!

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