

The Relationship of Periodontal Diseases to Other Diseases

Evidence suggests a possible link between periodontal diseases and other systemic conditions that can negatively affect a person's overall wellness, such as **diabetes** and **heart disease**.

Bacteria associated with periodontal diseases have been linked to **heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and preterm or low weight births**. The bacteria travel through the body's veins and arteries using them as a highway system to link to other parts of the body. Periodontal bacteria can also spread from the oral cavity to the rest of the body, including the lungs and can cause respiratory diseases associated with **chronic obstructive pulmonary disease**, the sixth leading cause of mortality in the United States.

No matter where bacteria travels in the body, the immune system will respond by sending white blood cells to battle the bacteria. These white blood cells release chemicals that create an inflammatory response. Inflammation can damage tissues. Scientists now understand that inflammation causes or complicates many diseases, including **pancreatic and kidney cancers, chronic kidney disease** and **Alzheimer's disease**. For example, inflammation can damage tissues in the brain which can increase a patient's risk of developing Alzheimer's. Inflammation from gum disease has also been linked to **arthritis**. Many scientists believe that inflammation is responsible for the development of **rheumatoid arthritis** in some of the estimated 2.1 million people suffering from the condition. Today, the level of inflammation in your body can be evaluated with a C-reactive protein test from a blood sample.

Autoimmune diseases can have side effects related to oral health. Conditions such as **Sjogrens syndrome, Lichen planus, pemphigus, pemphigoid, HIV/AIDS, and Erythema multiforme** can present many different oral complications. Advise your dental professional if you suffer from an autoimmune disease. Your dental professional can work with you and your physician to help control any periodontal infections and adverse drug interactions.

Maintaining good oral health can impact your quality of life. Good oral health provides the ability to eat and speak with confidence and contributes to your overall wellness. This includes maintaining a regular oral hygiene routine, including daily brushing, flossing, and regular dental visits. Brushing and flossing is the best way to prevent the development and progression of periodontal diseases. Through proper periodontal treatment, you can lower your risks for other diseases associated with periodontitis.

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