

Oral Health: What Can It Tell You?

Your oral health (health of your mouth, teeth, and gums) and overall health are much more connected than you might think. Your mouth can offer many clues about the overall health of your body. Sometimes, the first signs of disease show up as problems in your mouth. In other cases, infections in your mouth can cause problems in other areas of your body, such as your heart. Practicing good oral hygiene and being aware of the connection between your mouth and the rest of your body can help you stay healthy!

The gender connection

Women are more likely than men to develop oral health problems. Women are at highest risk during puberty, pregnancy, when menstruating, and during menopause. This may be because higher hormone levels during these times make women's bodies more sensitive to small amounts of plaque or bacteria. Gum disease during pregnancy has been linked to preterm delivery and low birth weight, putting both baby and mother at risk.

The diabetes connection

Your mouth may provide warning signs of diabetes. This is because out-of-control blood sugar levels can affect your mouth. Some signs to look for include bleeding gums, dry mouth, and infections. Cavities are also a problem as uncontrolled blood sugar can give the bacteria in your mouth extra sugar to feed on. Diabetes that is not controlled can also affect your mouth by reducing your white blood cell count. This makes you more prone to gum disease.

The heart disease connection

Many scientists believe that there is a link between cavities, gum disease, and heart disease. They believe that the bacteria in your mouth and your body's response to it can contribute to heart disease.

The osteoporosis connection

Osteoporosis is a disease that causes bones to become less dense over time as the body loses calcium. This can also lead to tooth loss. If, over time, your jaw becomes less dense and weakens, you may lose teeth. If you have osteoporosis, it is important to pay attention to your oral health and brush and floss often.

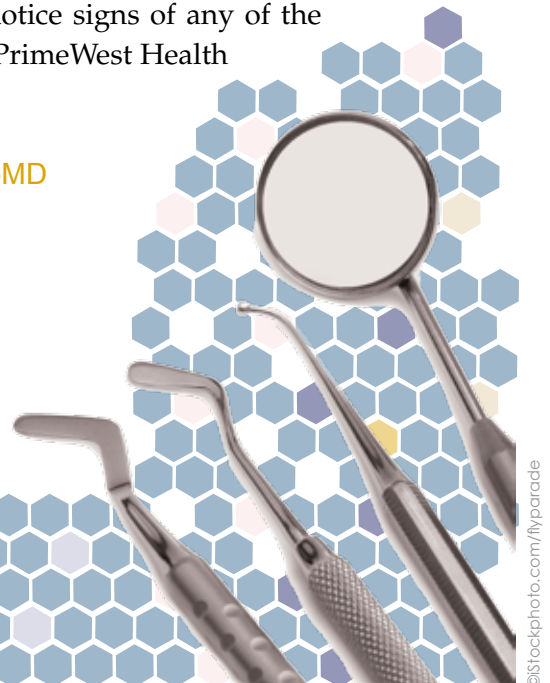
Break the connection

Reduce your risk of health problems by paying close attention to your oral health. Brush and floss regularly and have routine checkups with your dentist. Talk with your dentist if you notice signs of any of the health problems mentioned above. If you need help finding a dentist, call PrimeWest Health Member Services at 1-866-431-0801 (toll free).

Source: Heather Hatfield, "Oral Health: The Mouth-Body Connection," WebMD

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1-866-431-0801 (toll free); TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711

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កំណត់សំគាល់ ។ បើអ្នកត្រូវការជំនួយក្នុងការបកប្រែឯកសារនេះដោយឥតគិតថ្លៃ សូមហៅទូរសព្ទតាមលេខខាងលើ ។

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