

THE MOUTH-BODY CONNECTION

Did you know?

Most oral health conditions are largely preventable and can be treated in their early stages. By maintaining good oral health, you can help protect your overall health, well-being and quality of life.

WHAT IS THE MOUTH-BODY CONNECTION?

The mouth-body connection is the direct link between your oral health and your overall physical well-being. Your oral health can affect your general health, and poor oral health and untreated oral diseases are associated with several health conditions.

DEMENTIA

Severe gum disease (periodontitis) has been associated with an increased risk of dementia, particularly Alzheimer's disease.

CANCER

Gum disease has been associated with several types of cancer. Poor oral hygiene can lead to a build-up of dental plaque, where certain harmful bacteria can thrive. Some of these bacteria can contribute to pathways leading to cancer.

RESPIRATORY DISEASES

Bacteria that build up in the mouth, especially when oral hygiene is poor, can be breathed into the lungs and may cause a serious chest infection called aspiration pneumonia. The risk is highest in older adults. Poor oral health is also associated with an increased risk of chronic lung disease.

WHERE TO GO NEXT

Read the Risk factors for oral diseases fact sheet to learn more about the main risk factors and the steps you can take to protect both your mouth and your body.

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES

People with gum disease have a higher risk of developing heart and blood vessel diseases, including high blood pressure, than people without gum disease or those whose gum disease has been successfully treated and who maintain good oral health.

TYPE 2 DIABETES

Diabetes and gum disease are linked in both directions. Diabetes can increase your risk of gum disease, especially when blood glucose is not well controlled. Gum disease may also make diabetes harder to control. Successfully treating gum disease can help improve blood glucose control and reduce the risk of complications.

PREGNANCY COMPLICATIONS

Gum disease has been associated with pregnancy complications, including low birth weight, preterm birth and pre-eclampsia.

