

Periodontal Disease, Heart Disease and Stroke

Research has established that there exists a strong connection between periodontal disease and many other chronic conditions including heart disease, respiratory disease, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis. Periodontal disease is characterized by inflammation of the gum tissue due to the presence of disease-causing bacteria. Overtime, bacterial infection spreads below the gum line to attack the jaw bone. These periodontal disease causing bacteria exert effects throughout the body and can lead to a host of serious health issues. The link between periodontal disease and heart disease is so apparent that patients with untreated oral-periodontal infection are nearly twice as likely to suffer from coronary artery disease than those with healthy mouths. The effects of periodontal disease on heart disease extends beyond simply oral bacteria entering the bloodstream to include the impact of these bacteria precipitating on blood vessel walls. As strands of periodontal bacteria enter the bloodstream and attach to fatty plaques in the arteries, this attachment causes chronic inflammation. The resulting effects include clot formation and an increased risk of developing serious cardio-vascular conditions including heart attack & stroke.

The Periodontal - Respiratory Disease Connection

Respiratory disease can occur when fine droplets are inhaled from the mouth and throat into the lungs. These droplets typically contain bacteria that can spread through the lungs to impair breathing. Research has recently established that bacteria found in the mouth and throat can be drawn into the lungs (lower respiratory tract) and there cause severe infection or a worsening of existing lung conditions.

Periodontal Disease and Osteoporosis

Since both periodontal disease and osteoporosis result in a permanent loss of bone, these two diseases have been studied for possible connections. Research has discovered that in particular, post menopausal women who suffer from osteoporosis, are 86% more likely to develop periodontal disease. Inflammation caused by periodontal disease results in an accelerated loss of jaw-bone weakened by osteoporosis. This explains why periodontal infection (periodontitis) is particularly destructive and rapidly progressive in osteoporotic patient

Oral Cancer

According to the **Canadian Cancer Society**, over **30,000** cases of oral cancer are diagnosed yearly, with over **700** of these cases resulting in death . Fortunately, when oral cancer is diagnosed early, treatment tends to be very effective. There are many types of oral cancers however, the most common form, malignant squamous cell carcinoma typically originates on the lips and mouth tissues. Other locations where oral cancers can develop include the tongue, salivary glands, throat, gums, and face. It is important to note that over 75% of oral cancers are linked to avoidable behaviors such as smoking-tobacco use or excessive alcohol consumption. Any alteration in the appearance of your gums and surrounding oral tissues could be a warning sign of disease, the most serious being oral cancer.

*You will be reassured to know that Dr. Novack performs an oral cancer screening examination as part of **all** Periodontal Supportive Maintenance Appointments.*