



Tooth Talk

by Linda Kreutzer, RDH

Gum Problems Linked to Stroke, Heart Disease

Research is now ongoing in the dental world concerning the link between bacteria found in the mouth and heart problems. The idea is amazing! How can having an unhealthy mouth cause heart disease?

Researchers are trying to prove a definite connection. It's **bacteria** that's the link between disease of the gums and disease of other parts of our bodies, including the heart and brain.

The first thing to understand is the nature of bacteria. It tends to travel in our bloodstream, usually coming from an outside source. Bacteria is everywhere, and doesn't cause a problem for us **unless** it gets in our bodies in large amounts where it shouldn't be.

For instance, if you have a cut on your finger and you don't keep it clean, it becomes infected. Bacteria causes the infection because it can enter our blood. Thank goodness our immune system usually can kill the tiny bacteria "invaders," keeping the infected area small and under control.

What if there was so much bacteria that our body's immune system just couldn't fight it off? We would feel tired and sick all the time. If our health isn't so good to begin with, large amounts of bacteria constantly in our bloodstream are not a good thing.

Where can the largest amounts of the nastiest bacteria be found? In the human mouth, especially an adult mouth with large amounts of plaque, pockets (diseased areas), and bleeding. The bacteria found in periodontal disease (formerly known as pyorrhea) are known to destroy tissue and even the bone that holds our teeth in our mouths. It's extremely toxic.

An infection around every tooth (that's what gum disease is) covers a large area of approximately 3 inches by 8 inches. All that infected area is covered with bacterial plaque. It's well known that this nasty bacteria gets into the human blood supply.

Our blood supply is pumped through our hearts 60 to 90 times per minute. That's a lot of bacteria in our

heart. What if the heart is already starting to get sick? What if the arteries in our brains are becoming clogged? Adding insult to injury by adding tons of toxic bacteria to these areas is asking for trouble. Science and medicine are close to proving that gum disease and medical conditions, including stroke and heart disease, are related.

It's enough to make you want to make a dental appointment to find out if dental disease is a problem for you. Warning signs include bleeding and puffy gums, bad breath, and large amounts of tarter and plaque on the teeth. Smoking cigarettes also heightens the risk for periodontitis (pyorrhea). Having gum disease does **not** mean that heart disease or stroke is going to happen. It just puts you more at risk.

Lower your risk for developing heart disease (clogged arteries) by quitting smoking, exercising daily, eating healthy, and visiting your dentist and dental hygienist on a regular basis.

CHS Clarifies Current Priority Funding Level

Mission Statement: To ensure services are available at the end of the calendar year, Contract Health Services (CHS) manages money by fluctuating services to stay within the budgeted level of funds. You may experience your care being deferred due the level of spending occurring in CHS.

Priority I: Emergent/Acutely Urgent Care Services

Definition: Diagnostic or therapeutic services that are necessary to prevent the immediate death or serious impairment of the health of the individual, and which, because of the threat to the life or health of the individual, necessitate the use of the most accessible health care available and capable of furnishing such service. Diagnosis and treatment of injuries or medical conditions that, if left untreated, would result in uncertain but potentially grave outcomes.

It's World Breastfeeding Month



In celebration of World Breastfeeding Month in August, those of us at the Siletz Clinic who support your breastfeeding efforts would like to hear from you and your family.

We ask that you please complete the

following statement and share your breastfeeding experience with us. Please mail it to Siletz Clinic, P.O. Box 320, Siletz, OR 97380.

You'll be entered into our drawing and if selected, your entry will be featured in the next issue of *Siletz News*!

The thing I love/loved best about breastfeeding my child is/was ...

Name: _____ Phone: _____

By signing this form, you are giving the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon consent to use your quote in *Siletz News*. Thank you.

Signature: _____

Moms and Babies Breastfeeding Circle

2nd Tuesday of each month, 6 - 7:30 p.m.,
Housing Department Conference Room

Priority II: Preventive Care Services

Definition: Primary health care that is aimed at the prevention of disease or disability. This includes services proven effective in avoiding an occurrence (primary prevention) and services proven effective in mitigating the consequences of an illness or condition (secondary prevention). Level II services are available at most IHS or tribal facilities.

Priority III: Primary and Secondary Care Services

Definition: Inpatient and outpatient care services that involve the treatment of prevalent illness or conditions that have a significant impact on morbidity and mortality. This involves treatment for conditions that may be delayed without progressive loss of function or risk of life, limb, or senses. It includes

services that may not be available at many IHS facilities and/or may require specialty consultation.

Priority IV: Chronic Tertiary and Extended Care Services

Definition: Inpatient and outpatient care services that 1) are not essential for initial/emergent diagnosis or therapy, 2) have less impact on mortality than morbidity, or 3) are high cost, are elective, and often require tertiary care facilities. These services are not readily available from direct care IHS or tribal facilities. Careful case management by the CHS Gatekeeping Review Committee is a requirement, as is monitoring by the medical officer or his/her designee. Depending on cost, the referral may require concurrence by the clinical/medical director.

The Siletz CHS program is currently approving services at level II.