



# THE MOUTH BODY CONNECTION

## Infection and Inflammation

Dentists have observed that illnesses and conditions of the mouth, gums, and teeth are directly related to illnesses and conditions in the rest of the body. Research is backing this up. Inflammation and bacterial infections in the mouth and diseases like diabetes, heart disease, stroke and even pregnancy issues, like low birth-weight infants are related!

Inflammation is the first response of the immune system to injury, infection or irritation. Its purpose is to isolate and eliminate infection. The entire body is affected by the process of inflammation. If the cause of the inflammation does not go away or becomes worse, harm may occur to heart, blood vessels, joints, nerves, pancreas or liver.

Periodontal (gum and bone) disease typically starts from bacterial plaque deposits on teeth or gums growing and triggering



inflammation. Gum disease can exist in the absence of symptoms. Left untreated periodontal disease can cause loose teeth, exposed roots, long-looking teeth, bad breath, sensitivity, bleeding, swelling and pain. If bacteria and inflammation in the mouth from chronic gum disease are not con-

trolled, the body can never shut down the inflammatory system in the rest of the body.

What can I do to stay healthy?

- Visit your dentist as frequently as he/she recommends.
- Follow your dentist's recommendations.
- Drink at least eight cups of

water per day.

- Maintain good home care. At a minimum, proper daily flossing and brushing.
- More frequent cleanings, if recommended.
- Accept scaling and root planing of the teeth if recommended or specialist referral.
- Follow up with periodontal maintenance visits.
- Try to maintain a healthy balance of exercise, proper diet, and sufficient rest.
- Visit your medical doctor for appropriate check-ups.
- Let your dentist know about any changes or issues with your general health.

Maintaining a healthy mouth and reducing oral inflammation will greatly reduce common and very harmful health problems.

A healthy mouth will make you a healthier person

*For Healthy Smiles,  
Dr. Norm and Melanie De-Jong*

*Members of the American Academy of Oral and Systemic Health*