Gum Disease and Your Health

By Juan Teodoro, D.M.D.



Periodontitis, or gum disease, is a chronic inflammatory disease that destroys bone and the gum tissues that support the teeth. It is the major cause of adult tooth loss and it affects nearly 75% of Americans.

Periodontal Disease Can Increase Risk of Cardiovascular Disease

In the past few years, several studies have shown that patients with periodontal disease have an increased risk for cardiovascular disease. Periodontal disease and cardiovascular disease are both inflammatory diseases, and inflammation is the common mechanism that connects them. Inflammation is the body's reaction to fight off infection or guard against injury. While inflammation initially intends to have a protective effect, untreated chronic inflammation can lead to dysfunction of the affected tissues, and therefore to severe health complications.

The suggested inflammatory pathway starts in the oral cavity when bacterial pathogens or inflammatory chemicals are carried into the bloodstream and into the heart. Evidence comes from animal studies showing periodontal bacteria found in plaque deposits that narrow coronary arteries. Additional evidence from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey found that people with periodontal disease were much more likely to be diagnosed with heart disease than those without periodontitis.

Assess Risk for Future Cardiovascular Disease Based on Current Periodontal Disease

Recently, a consensus paper on the relationship between heart disease and gum disease was published in the two leading publications for the Cardiology and Periodontology specialties; the American Journal of Cardiology and the Journal of Periodontology. The clinical recommendations outlined in the consensus paper advised periodontists to inform their patients of the increased risk of cardiovascular disease associated with periodontal disease and also assess their risk for future cardiovascular disease. This paper also recommends that physicians managing patients with cardiovascular disease evaluate the mouth for the basic signs of periodontal disease such as significant tooth loss, visual signs of oral inflammation, bleeding and / or receding gums.

Cardiologists and Periodontists Join Forces

Cardiologists and periodontists are joining forces to help reduce the risk of these associated diseases by controlling inflammation, thereby helping to reduce further disease progression. Ultimately, our common goal is to improve our patient's overall health.

"I have been diagnosed with periodontal disease, now what do I do?" There are several treatment options to treat periodontal disease and it depends upon the severity. A periodontist is the dental specialist, who diagnoses and treats periodontal disease. Your periodontist will diagnose the severity of periodontitis and provide you with your treatment options. Some options for treating periodontal disease include: scaling and root planning, periodontal surgery (which could include grafts – bone and soft tissue) or Regeneration Therapy (LANAP – Laser Assisted New Attachment Procedure) using Periolase. It has been shown that with professional dental care, the incidence and severity of periodontal disease are lower in individuals who receive regular dental treatment.



To learn more, call Dr. Juan Teodoro at Advanced Periodontics & Implants at 239-333-4343, or visit our website at www.bonitaimplants.com. "Patients are not healthy without good oral health." The oral cavity is the gateway to the body!



***Dr. Teodoro** is a Board Certified Periodontist. He holds both Diplomate status in the American Academy of Periodontology and the Intrenational Congress of Oral Implantologists. Dr. Teodoro served as a Major in the U.S. Air Force practicing periodontics. Throughout his Air Force career he served as Chief of Periodontics, Director of the Implant Board & Clinical Instructor. He is currently a clinical assistant professor at the Naples dental residency program for the University of Florida. Dr. Teodoro is still the only periodontist in both Lee & Collier County trained in Advanced Laser dentistry.*