



My Teeth Could Kill Me?

**“The Connection Between
Your Oral Health and
Your Body’s Health”**



Re: Special Report

My Teeth Could Kill Me?

Dear Friend,

Regular tooth cleanings with periodontal therapy just might prolong your life, according to the latest research by dental experts. As strange as it may sound, an infection in your gums can travel through your body to other organs, such as your heart, digestive system, and lungs. This is why it's more important than ever to go for regular dental check-ups and ensure that your periodontal health is constantly managed.

Periodontal disease and poor oral hygiene may be indicators of premature death, according to Dr. Michael F. Roizen in his classic book *Real Age: Are You as Young as You Can Be?* That's because gum disease has been linked to heart disease, diabetes, respiratory disease, digestive problems, osteoporosis, and immune problems.

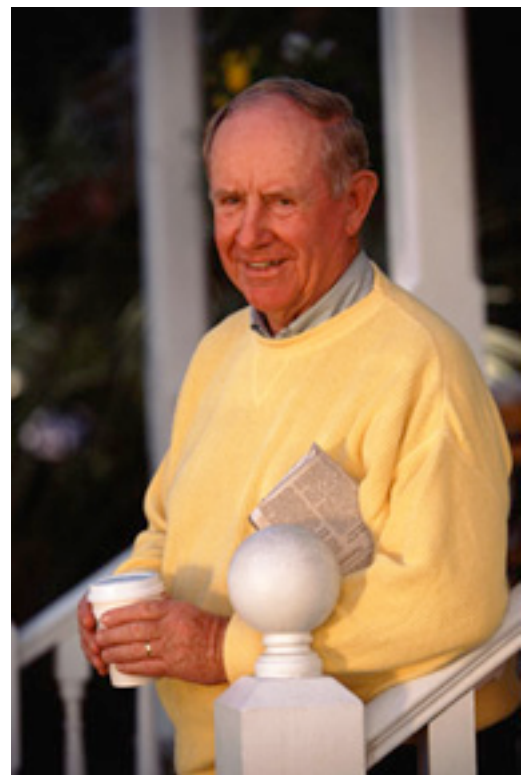
Young men who had a maximum oral hygiene index of 6 (0 indicating ideal oral hygiene and 6 poor oral hygiene) had a three to four times higher risk of dying sooner than those who had a hygiene index of 0. In addition, young men with periodontitis had a nearly three fold increased risk of dying from coronary heart disease.

Untreated periodontal disease and decay in and around the mouth is like having an open wound the size of a fist; it's just invisible because it's under the gums. Periodontal disease, usually called Gum Disease, is a chronic infection involving about 500 different kinds of bacteria that can affect heart disease.

The way it works is that chronic infections may trigger a chain of chemical events that cause inflammation, or swelling, throughout the body. When plaque lining the arteries causes them to become inflamed, blood clots can form, leading to heart attack or stroke.

Studies have found that people with periodontal disease are more likely to suffer from coronary artery disease than those who don't. Some researchers believe that bacteria shed by chronic oral infections can spread through the bloodstream and contribute to disease in the heart and other parts of the body.

Patients who receive regular tooth cleanings may have better overall health than patients who do not, according to the latest scientific research.



The evidence is so striking that, according to the September 19th 2006 issue of *The Wall Street Journal*, several health plans have taken notice and decided to cover tooth cleanings as part of their overall medical package in the hopes that there will be a decrease in the incidence of premature deliveries, diabetes, and heart disease.

Common signs of gum disease include bleeding gums or pus between the teeth. Left untreated, this chronic infection can destroy the bone that supports the teeth and may lead to tooth loss. Those at risk for cardiovascular disease should consult with a dentist for a periodontal screening and evaluation.

Say "Ahhh" to Avoid Heart Disease

By allowing your dentist to treat your gum disease, you are decreasing your chances for developing heart disease. As strange as it may sound, an infection in your gums can travel through your body to your heart. This is why it's more important than ever to go for regular dental check-ups and ensure that your periodontal health is constantly managed.

The word *periodontal* means "around the tooth." Periodontal disease is a chronic bacterial infection that affects the gums and bone supporting the teeth.



Periodontal disease can affect one tooth or many teeth. It begins when the bacteria in plaque (the sticky, colorless film that constantly forms on your teeth) causes the gums to become inflamed.

According to the American Academy of Periodontology, up to 30% of the population may be genetically susceptible to gum disease. Despite aggressive oral care habits, these people may be six times more likely to develop periodontal disease.

For the past decade, several studies have concluded that there is a strong link between periodontal disease and coronary heart disease. One result of periodontal disease is the loss of teeth.

When the gums become so diseased, your teeth can wiggle out. This led researchers in Finland to investigate the associations between the number of missing teeth and diagnosed heart disease in 1,384 men aged 45 to 64 years.

The researchers discovered that those with a higher number of missing teeth from sustained oral infections--which is a direct result of periodontal disease--had a higher likelihood of heart disease.

Read this patient's story to understand the dental-health to heart-health connection...

“I’ll Walk You Down the Aisle...”



My daughter has met someone special. She thinks he might be the one. I am extremely happy for her, but there is a problem. She is worried I won't be there for her when it is time for me to walk her down the aisle. I'm worried, too.

I've already lost my father and two brothers to heart disease and I'm afraid that I am well on my way to following in their footsteps. They were in their early 60's and I am now 58. So, when she told me about the man she met, and how she feels about him, I made a decision. Actually, I've made a few.

I decided to visit my regular doctor. During the appointment, I had several tests completed that officially diagnosed me with heart disease. He prescribed medication, exercise, and diet.

The exercise and diet part are probably the hardest part of my treatment program. I now have to get up and move instead of sitting on the couch watching countless hours of TV with a bag of potato chips. But I made a promise to myself and to my daughter.

I also decided to visit a new dentist for a check-up. A friend of mine told me that there is a possible link between heart disease and periodontal disease, also known as gum disease and I wanted to cover all of my bases.

The dentist said he was glad that I was taking an active role because I did indeed have the beginnings of periodontal disease and he said I should be treated. I once again thought about my daughter and walking her down the aisle, about holding my first grandchild, and eventually, being there the day she turns 58.

So, I knew in addition to the exercise, good diet, and medication from my doctor, I was going to have to take more drastic steps and treat my periodontal disease with regular periodontal treatment sessions.

I decided to go with the non-surgical route to treat my gum disease. This involved treatment to remove plaque and calculus through scaling. I also started using a special toothpaste and mouthwash. And, of course, that old, reliable enemy of gum disease – flossing.

I am so happy with my decision. It was scary to go through some of the tests, but I know with my hard work and regular visits to the dentist I will be there to walk my daughter down the aisle.

I'm already starting to feel better. I've also met the man my daughter loves. And now I'm even more excited for her because she deserves the best and he's as close as I've met yet. I want to always be there for her and that's why I'm so happy I've decided to take charge of my health - including my oral health.

It's Not Just Your Teeth You're Saving--It's Your Life.

Worldwide, periodontal disease may affect as many as three of four people, but only about 15 percent get treated.

Periodontal disease is the most common chronic infectious disease in the world, more common than the cold. Population surveys and studies done in the United States indicate that more than 50 percent of adults have gingivitis and 30 percent have periodontitis, according to the American Academy of Periodontology. The problem increases with age.



The bottom line is that periodontal disease may be far more serious threat to your health than previously realized. To prolong your life, take action now to protect your gums. Call us for an appointment.

Tooth Loss Affects Digestive Disorders



Tooth loss is the result of an advanced state of periodontal disease, in which the gums become so infected they cannot hold the teeth any longer.

When teeth fall out, it is more difficult to eat, and people without teeth--even those who wear dentures--are the most vulnerable to digestive and other related problems.

Research indicates that changes in food preferences and subsequent nutrient deficiencies are associated with tooth loss. Even those with dentures do not always obtain the necessary nutrients. One study of denture-wearers found that their chewing efficiency was about one-sixth that of a person with natural teeth.

Poor chewing has been associated with a decrease in vitamin A and fiber intake and an increase in cholesterol, saturated fat and calories, ingredients that increase the risks of cancer and heart disease. This study concluded that most of the patients with dentures showed a low chewing performance classification. They also took more medication

for gastrointestinal disorders than those with a higher chewing performance.

One way to prevent this escalation of problems is to have your teeth cleaned regularly. Periodontal therapy will eliminate any infections in the gums, which will help you keep your teeth for life. This, in turn, will help you eat better, look better, feel better, and live longer.

Periodontal Disease Stresses Immune System

Periodontal disease is an infection of the gums that not only affects your oral health, but also your overall health. The periodontal pocket



acts as a reservoir for numerous toxic bacteria, which can create an added stress to the immune system.

Gum infections can have a devastating effect on the immune system because it involves the gums and underlying bone.

The immune system can become so compromised that its ability to resist additional infections and toxins could be diminished. A weakened immune system puts the various body systems at risk, creating a domino effect.

Gum disease has been found to increase the risk of heart attack by as much as 25 percent, and the risk of stroke by a factor of 10. Gum disease can worsen respiratory diseases, such as pneumonia, bronchitis, emphysema, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

In fact, if you are suffering from any other infectious diseases, you cannot afford to let gum disease go untreated. Gum disease is a serious health issue that should be treated as quickly as possible.

Periodontal Disease Negatively Affects Diabetes

Numerous studies indicate that the presence and severity of periodontal disease can increase the risk of poor blood sugar control in diabetics. One study that compared diabetic patients with minimal and severe periodontal disease found that those with the more severe periodontal disease had a significantly greater number of cardiovascular complications, including stroke, angina, and heart failure.

Another study found that the treatment of periodontal disease in diabetics might actually improve the diabetics' ability to control diabetes. Although there are no known definitive reasons why periodontitis impacts blood sugar control in diabetics, a few theories have been created.

Acute bacterial and viral infections control an increase in the body's resistance to insulin, which aggravates blood sugar control. In diabetics, further infection exacerbates insulin resistance and significant worsens its ability to regular blood sugar.

Periodontal disease and diabetes have a complex interaction. Anyone with diabetes, regardless of the severity, should have a thorough oral health examination. If gum disease is found, every effort should be made to eliminate it.

No Bones About It: Gum Disease Increases Risk of Osteoporosis

Researchers at the University of Buffalo and the University of New York at Buffalo found that most people diagnosed with periodontal disease were at a higher risk of underlying osteoporosis. Published in the *Journal of Periodontology*, the study involved more than 2,500 postmenopausal women.

It found that women with low bone density, or osteoporosis, were at an 86 percent risk of having gum disease, the major cause of tooth loss in those older than 35 years.



Researchers also discovered a very strong relationship between the advanced form of gum disease that causes bone loss, gum-attachment loss, tooth loss, and osteoporosis.

It is believed that eliminating gum disease may also help combat osteoporosis, which affects more than 20 million people in the

United States, accounting for nearly 2 million fractures a year.

Once again, the link between gum disease and overall health cannot be overemphasized.

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We offer a full range of dental services and **we absolutely never pressure our patients**. Ultimately our only job is to make sure you have all the information you need to make an informed decision.

So call today and start on the road to a more confident you!

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You have nothing to lose, and a great new smile to gain. That will put a smile on my face too!

Warmly,

Todd Christy, DDS
Eric Balsis, DDS
Berrien Springs Dental
8383 M 139
Berrien Spring, MI 49103

PS. If you can't use this, please pass it on to a friend.

One last thought -- it's important. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me at **(269) 471-4055**.

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