

THE PROACTIVE

Striving to educate our members to be more ProActive towards a healthier lifestyle.

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



A Window to Your Overall Health

Discover the Connection Between Your Oral Health and the Rest of Your Body

Your mouth is home to about 700 species of microbes. These include germs like bacteria, fungus, and more. Everybody has them.

Some microbes are helpful and others can cause problems. The trouble starts when microbes form a sticky, colorless film called plaque on your teeth. Oral hygiene practices such as brushing and flossing help to keep your mouth clean but germs always grow again and form more plaque.

Different microbes grow in different places like your teeth, tongue, and the tiny pockets between tooth and gum. Once they've found their homes, they form diverse communities with the other germs. Within these communities, microbes work together to protect themselves with a slimy, sticky material called a matrix. The matrix in plaque makes it harder to remove it.



You can't have a healthy body without a healthy mouth. Read on to learn the many ways microbes may affect your overall health.

Normally, the body's natural defenses and good oral health care, such as daily brushing and flossing, keep bacteria under control. However, without proper oral hygiene,

bacteria can reach levels that lead to oral infections, such as tooth decay and gum disease.

Your oral health might contribute to various diseases and conditions, including:

■ Endocarditis

This infection typically occurs when bacteria or other germs from another part of your body, such as your mouth, spread through your bloodstream and attach to the inner lining of your heart chambers or valves.

■ Pregnancy and Birth Complications

Periodontitis (severe gum infection) has been linked to premature birth and low birth weight.

■ Pneumonia

Certain bacteria in your mouth can be pulled into your lungs, causing pneumonia and other respiratory diseases.

Conversely, certain conditions might affect your oral health, including:

■ Diabetes

By reducing the body's resistance to infection, diabetes puts your gums at risk. Gum disease appears to be more frequent and severe among people who have diabetes. To make matters worse, research shows that people who have gum disease have a harder time controlling their blood sugar levels. Regular periodontal care can improve diabetes control.

Source: [newsinhealth.nih.gov](https://www.newshealth.nih.gov), [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)

■ HIV/AIDS

Oral problems, such as painful mucosal lesions, are common in people who have HIV/AIDS.

■ Osteoporosis

This bone-weakening disease is linked with periodontal bone loss and tooth loss. Certain drugs used to treat osteoporosis carry a small risk of damage to the bones of the jaw.

■ Alzheimer's Disease

Worsening oral health is seen as Alzheimer's disease progresses.

Other conditions that might be linked to oral health include eating disorders, rheumatoid arthritis, certain cancers, and an immune system disorder that causes dry mouth (Sjogren's syndrome).

Other medications that cause dry mouth/ reduce saliva flow include: decongestants, antihistamines, painkillers, diuretics, and antidepressants. Saliva washes away food and neutralizes acids produced by bacteria in the mouth, helping to protect you from microbes that multiply and lead to disease.

Tell your dentist about the medications you take and about changes in your overall health, especially if you've recently been ill or you have a chronic condition, such as diabetes.

Keep Mouth Microbes in Check

Help prevent tooth decay and mouth infections by following these simple tips:

- Brush and Floss
- Limit Sugary Foods and Drinks
- Get Regular Exams and Cleanings