



Cardiovascular Disease and Oral Health Fact Sheet

FOR PROVIDERS

OCTOBER 2017

The Challenge...

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women. About 610,000 Americans die from heart disease each year—that's 1 in every 4 deaths.¹ High blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol, and smoking are key heart disease risk factors for heart disease. About half of Americans (49%) have at least one of these three risk factors.

What you need to know...

Studies show that mouth bacteria involved in the development of periodontal disease can move into the bloodstream and cause an elevation in C-reactive protein (CRP), a marker for inflammation in the blood vessels. Increase of CRP from periodontal inflammation could potentially contribute to the increased risk of future cardiac events. These changes can, in turn, increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.²

Ways You Can Help...

- Urge at-risk patients to get regular dental checkups and regular dental cleanings to evaluate their periodontal status, recommending treatment as needed.
- Patients with heart disease, who also have signs or symptoms of gum disease (but have not been diagnosed with it) or high CRP levels, should receive regular periodontal evaluations.
- Review your patients' list of medications at every dental visit, since many cardiovascular medications have oral side effects.
- Stay informed on the latest prophylactic premedication guidelines and when necessary, inform patients they require antibiotic premedication prior to certain dental procedures.
- Be aware of the emerging and strengthening evidence that periodontitis is a risk factor for developing atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, and advise patients of the risk.³

Periodontal treatment can decrease markers of systemic inflammation.

Several species of periodontitis-causing bacteria have been found in the atherosclerotic plaque in heart arteries and elsewhere. This plaque can lead to heart attack. Oral bacteria may also harm blood vessels or cause blood clots by releasing toxins that resemble proteins found in artery walls or the bloodstream. The immune system's response to these toxins can harm vessel walls or make blood clot more easily. Researchers believe that the body's inflammatory response results in atherosclerosis (clogged arteries).³ Antibiotic premedication is meant to reduce the risk of cardiovascular events caused by oral bacteria.



For more information:

<http://www.joponline.org/doi/pdf/10.1902/jop.2009.097001>
<http://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/340/bmj.c2451.full.pdf>

Or, contact Office of Oral Health

Phone: 860-509-8251 Email: dph.officeoforalhealth@ct.gov

Footnotes:

1. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3084572/pdf/JOM-2-5781.pdf>
2. <http://www.colgateprofessional.com/Professional/v1/en/us/locale-assets/docs/Periodontal-Disease-and-Overall-Health-A-Clinicians-Guide-2nd-Edition.pdf>
3. <http://www.rdhmag.com/articles/print/volume-33/issue-12/features/the-most-important-perio-systemic-facts.html>