

It is said the eyes are the window to the soul, but did you know your oral health is the window to your overall health?

At **The Kodish Dental Group** we want you to know that the condition of your oral health plays a very important role in your overall health. According to the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD), more than 90 percent of all systemic (overall) diseases have oral health symptoms. Research shows that poor oral health can be a sign of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, premature births, and osteoporosis. Please allow us a moment of your time to educate you on the connection between your oral health and your overall health. Once you understand, you'll see that a healthy mouth is connected to a healthier you.

The Importance of Regular Oral Healthcare

Your teeth and gums hold important clues to other health issues. So, if you're interested in maintaining good overall health, as well as your smile, visit us for a checkup and cleaning at least twice a year and, depending on your personal situation, we may recommend 3 or 4 visits per year. An exam allows us not only to help you maintain healthy teeth and gums, but to be on the lookout for developments that may lead to future health problems, including oral cancer.

Be sure to inform us about changes in your oral health and medical health, including any recent illnesses or chronic conditions, even if they seem unrelated to your mouth. Also, provide us with a current list of all medications you are taking, including prescription and over-the-counter medication. Finally, make certain to follow our recommendations, including your customized home care regimen.

Regular brushing and flossing and visits to our office will not only give you a healthier mouth, but will help you maintain an overall healthier you.

For additional information on how oral health affects your overall health please schedule an appointment by calling us at (954) 462-5252 or email mindy@gkodish.algxm.com.

Diabetes

Diabetes is a disease in which blood glucose (sugar) levels are above normal. This can lead to serious health problems including heart disease, blindness, kidney failure, and even leg or foot amputation. However, there are also some oral health implications associated with diabetes. The most common and potentially harmful oral health problems are gingivitis and periodontitis, which is a more severe form of gum disease where the gums and bone supporting the teeth become seriously damaged and result in tooth and bone loss.

Patients with inadequate blood sugar control appear to develop periodontitis more often and more severely and lose more teeth than those who control their diabetes. And because diabetes reduces the body's resistance to infection, the gums are among tissues likely to be affected. If you have diabetes, it's important that you also maintain good oral hygiene and visit us regularly to prevent periodontal disease and other health complications from developing.

Heart Disease and Stroke

Did you know that the plaque that develops on your teeth is the same plaque that causes heart attacks? The most common type of bacteria in dental plaque can escape into the bloodstream, travel through the arteries, and result in blood clots that can cause heart attacks.

A potentially fatal disease called bacterial endocarditis – a condition in which the lining of the heart and heart valves becomes enlarged – is also linked to plaque, as is chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, more commonly known as COPD. People with periodontal (gum) disease are nearly twice as likely to suffer from heart disease, according to the American Academy of Periodontology.

In addition, a study conducted by the Boston University School of Dental Medicine in 2006 stated that people who are missing some or all of their teeth due to periodontal disease are at an increased risk for having a stroke.

Because research shows a very strong link between healthy gums and a healthy heart, it's very important to take good care of your gums. Gum disease is caused by plaque buildup. Early signs of gum disease included bleeding or puffy gums, bad breath, mouth sores, and receding gums. You can prevent plaque buildup by brushing at least twice a day and flossing every day, along with visiting our office regularly. If you notice any signs of gum disease contact our office at (954) 462-5252 or mindy@gkodish.algxm.com right away.

Gum Disease and Pregnancy

Recent studies have also shown a relationship between gum disease and preterm, low-birth-weight babies. In fact, pregnant women with periodontal disease may be seven times more likely to have a premature baby. Low-birth-weight babies have a higher incidence of breathing problems, anemia, jaundice, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, congestive heart failure, and malnutrition. The likely cause of this is a labor-inducing chemical found in oral bacteria called prostaglandin. Very high levels of prostaglandin are found in women with severe cases of periodontal disease.

Additionally, gingivitis is especially common during the second to eighth months of pregnancy and can result in red, puffy, or tender gums that bleed when you brush your teeth. These problems are caused by an increased level of the hormone progesterone in your system. That's

why if you're having a baby, it's very important to have regular dental checkups. During your pregnancy, we may recommend more frequent cleanings to help you avoid any potential problems.

And it's not only during pregnancy when women are at higher risk for oral health problems. During other times of increased hormone levels, such as puberty, menstrual cycles, and menopause, women may also be more susceptible to plaque and bacteria.

Osteoporosis

There appears to be a direct link between the health of a person's bones and their oral health. Osteoporosis affects about 10 million Americans, with approximately eight million of them being women. Osteoporosis is a disease that weakens bones and increases the risk of fractures. Bones become fragile as bone mass decreases and bone tissues deteriorate. This can make people more vulnerable to fractures, especially of the hip, spine, and wrist.

However, studies have also suggested that there is a connection between osteoporosis and bone loss in the jaw. Researchers believe that osteoporosis may lead to tooth loss because the density of the jaw bone that supports the teeth may be decreased, which means that teeth no longer have a solid foundation. Osteoporosis that weakens the jaw may lower a person's defense against bacteria that affect the gums, which can lead to periodontal disease.

The good news is that osteoporosis is preventable for most people. In addition to good oral home care and regular dental visits, it's important for everyone, but especially women, to receive the recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D, exercise regularly, and avoid smoking and excessive alcohol use.

At Advanced Dental, we are concerned about your overall health as well as your oral health. If you have any questions regarding this information please contact us at (954) 462-5252 or mindy@gkodish.algxmail.com. We look forward to seeing you at your next dental visit and, as always, invite you to share this information with your family & friends...and send them our way too!