

KEEP YOUR TEETH (AND YOUR BODY) HEALTHY



Keeping your teeth clean isn't just about presenting the world with a beautiful smile. The health of your mouth is actually a gateway to the health of your entire body — so clean it up and shine from head to toe.



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Oral health problems from cavities to gum disease are caused by poor oral hygiene habits, like not flossing and drinking sugar-filled sodas. But those problems can extend far beyond causing pain in your teeth — they can also have a significant impact on your overall well-being.

Oral hygiene problems can affect your heart

Dr. Edmond W. Suh, D.D.S. of [Supremia Dentistry](#) says, "Many studies suggest that periodontal diseases or gum diseases that can range from gingivitis (inflammation of the gum tissue) to various forms of periodontitis (meaning bone and tissue loss) are linked to heart disease." He adds that research has shown people with gum disease are nearly twice as likely as those without it to suffer from heart disease, which is the number one cause of death in the U.S.

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The more bacteria in your blood, the more susceptible your body is to illness. Dr. Paul Perella of North Palm Beach Dentistry explains, "If your gums are inflamed due to poor oral hygiene, the bacteria that are causing the inflammation are able to get into your bloodstream and cause inflammation in other areas of your body."

A study featured on [Harvard Health Publications](#) states that when chewing and when brushing their teeth, people with gum disease release bacteria into their bloodstream. Many of those bacteria have also been found in arteries in the heart and other places in the body. According to the research, this plaque can even lead to a heart attack. The study also reports that bacteria in the mouth can lead to damaged blood vessels and cause blood clots that can lead to heart attack and stroke.

The rest of your health may also suffer

Besides your heart, your oral health can wreak havoc on other areas of the body — and it can even shorten your life span. Dr. J. Philipp says, "Dental infection has been linked to pre-term birth and even breast cancer." He even notes that people with untreated dental infections live an average of six years less than people without untreated infections and that people without teeth (even those who have full dentures) live an average of five years less than people with teeth.

Be gentle with your teeth

To avoid these scary health problems, remember to take good care of your teeth. And that means flossing regularly and brushing with a strengthening and whitening toothpaste like [ARM & HAMMER™](#). It also means not using your teeth as "tools." Beverly Hills dentist Dr. Kouros Maddahi says that you can reduce stress fractures in your teeth by not using them to do things like ripping the price tags off clothes.

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This nasty habit can lead to more serious problems like "pain with the jaw joint called temporomandibular joint (TMJ), which in some cases can be debilitating if left untreated," according to Dr. Jack Ringer, D.D.S. and president of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry.