

## Teeth Tips

**Brush and floss daily to reduce disease-causing bacteria**

**Eat a healthy, balanced diet; include lots of fruits and vegetables**

**Limit your intake of simple sugars**

**Quit smoking and other forms of tobacco use**

**Drink plenty of fluids to keep your mouth lubricated**

**Visit your oral health professional regularly**

**Regular use of a tongue-scraper will drastically reduce the amount of bacteria in your mouth.**

**Using a soft bristled toothbrush along with proper brushing technique will reduce your risk of developing “toothbrush abrasion” on your gums and teeth.**

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# Dental Hygiene times<sup>®</sup>

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## This issue

Oral Health and Total Health P.1  
Know the Connection P.2

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## Oral Health and Total Health Let's Make the Connection!

We cannot say we are totally healthy unless each and every part of our bodies is functioning at their optimum. Science has recently begun to uncover some very important connections between oral health and overall systemic health. We are just now beginning to understand that a healthy mouth is related to a healthy body.

### [ Diabetes ]

This condition affects an estimated 2 million Canadians. Poor oral health and gum disease in particular, plays a role when it comes to the ability to control one's blood sugar level. It is also known that poorly controlled levels of blood sugar decreases one's resistance to infection which in turn can further complicate any existing gum disease.

### [ Respiratory Health ]

Bacteria from gum disease can be inhaled from the mouth and throat into the respiratory tract increasing the potential for conditions such as aspiration pneumonia. This is a serious risk for those with compromised immunity such as the elderly or those suffering from chronic lung conditions.

### [ Heart Disease ]

Plaque bacteria responsible for gum disease are thought to also play a role in heart disease. Bacteria from the mouth entering the blood stream can cause inflammation in the coronary arteries leading to heart disease.

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## Healthy Smile and Body Know the Connection

### [ Pregnancy and Baby's Health ]

Studies show that pregnant women with gum disease are seven times more likely to have premature or low birth-weight babies. It's believed that gum disease may trigger biological mechanisms for early labour.

### [ Osteoporosis ]

Scientific evidence points to links between osteoporosis and the loss of bone in the jaw. It's thought that the same mechanisms causing osteoporosis systemically in the body are at least partly responsible for loss of bone in the oral cavity. From an oral health point of view, this is significant since the teeth are essentially embedded in the jawbone--the very structure giving the teeth their strength, stability and support.

### [ Peptic Ulcers ]

These stomach ulcers, are thought to be associated with the bacteria "Helicobacter pylori". Interestingly, these same bacteria are also found in the periodontal pockets of people with gum-disease. Studies have found positive correlations between individuals with periodontal disease and incidence of peptic ulcers.

### [ Oral Disease ]

Many signs of oral pathology are silent in nature and difficult to diagnose or detect without professional assessment. Other symptoms, however, are easily recognized. Some obvious indications of gum disease include gums that are reddish, purplish, loose, bleeding and receding. There may also be the presence of "gum-boils" or abscesses surrounding the teeth. The teeth can be covered with plaque or tartar and may be loose, or sensitive to hot, cold, pressure or sweets. You can also have bad breath and be unable to eat and chew comfortably.

### [ What is a healthy mouth? ]

If you know or suspect that you have gum-disease, the good news is that this condition that is very treatable. With good daily oral hygiene and professional intervention, your gums will appear pink, firm and be absent of bleeding. The teeth, free from plaque, tartar and pain or sensitivity will begin to feel firm and strong. Your breath will be fresh and you will be able to enjoy eating and chewing from a large variety of foods.

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