



Mind Your Mouth

We all want to avoid eating, drinking or breathing in poisons, germs and other things that are bad for us. But did you know there are other dangers lurking in your mouth? Believe it or not, bacteria from your mouth can easily get into your bloodstream. When it does, it can cause infection and inflammation wherever it spreads, which sometimes leads to serious health problems. You can also transfer germs from touching your face or mouth.

Maintain your basic oral hygiene every day. If you smoke, now is a good time to quit. Avoid mindless snacking, especially on junk food and sugary drinks. Instead, drink water. It both satisfies the urge and fills your stomach. It's good for you, too. Also, try to practice being aware of how often you touch your face and mouth.

Keep Your Head

Poor oral health can affect your brain. Substances released from gums inflamed by infection can kill brain cells and lead to memory loss. Dementia and possibly even Alzheimer's disease can result from gingivitis if bacteria in your mouth spreads to nerve channels or enters your bloodstream.

Hold Your Breath

Your respiratory system can also suffer due to poor oral health. Bacteria from infected teeth and swollen gums can be inhaled into your lungs or travel there through the bloodstream. This can lead to respiratory infections, pneumonia, acute bronchitis and even chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Have a Heart

Cardiovascular disease can also result from poor oral health. The bacteria from periodontal disease that cause inflamed gums can get into your bloodstream and cause many problems. One is atherosclerosis, a serious condition resulting in plaque buildup and hardening of the arteries. The damaging impact on the arteries and blood vessels can lead to high blood pressure and increase your risk for stroke and heart attack. Endocarditis can also develop. This is when the lining of the heart becomes infected. It is often fatal.

It Grows on You

Obviously, poor oral health practices such as smoking or using tobacco products can lead to oral and throat cancers. But other types of cancer have also been linked to gum disease. With poor oral health, your risk for kidney cancer, pancreatic cancer and blood cancer is much higher.

Practice Good Oral Hygiene

Here are some tips to maintain oral health:

- Brush for two minutes, twice a day.
- Floss your teeth daily.
- Don't smoke or chew tobacco products.
- Use fluoridated toothpaste and mouthwash.
- Limit sugary foods and drinks.
- Eat a balanced diet for optimum nutrition.





Protect and Defend

Healthy teeth are clean and free of pain caused by cavities and disease. Healthy gums are pink and do not bleed when brushed or flossed. The best way to prevent serious health issues caused by bad oral health is to practice good oral hygiene — and to see your dentist twice a year.

