

10 Health Issues Caused by Bad Oral Health

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Oral health is about so much more than just the health of the mouth, teeth, and gums. Because the mouth is a primary entryway into the body, poor oral health can have negative consequences for the entire body. Teeth that ache, gums that bleed, and breath that smells bad are all indicators of poor oral health. Bacteria from the mouth can easily get into the bloodstream and cause infection and inflammation wherever it spreads. It is important to practice good oral hygiene and to see a dentist regularly in order to avoid serious risk to the body's overall health. Here are some common and serious health problems caused by bad oral health:

Cardiovascular Disease

Having poor oral health puts a person at risk for heart disease. If the gums are inflamed due to the bacteria that causes periodontal disease, that same bacteria can actually get into the bloodstream causing the arteries to build up plaque and harden. This hardening of the arteries is called atherosclerosis, and it is very serious. It leads to blood flow problems and heart blockages, and it increases the likelihood of having a heart attack. The damaging impact on the arteries and blood vessels can lead to hypertension and increase the risk for strokes. Endocarditis can also develop, which is an often fatal condition that occurs when the lining of the heart becomes infected.

Dementia

Poor oral health can affect the brain. Substances that are released from gums inflamed by infection can actually kill brain cells and lead to memory loss. Dementia and possibly even **Alzheimer's disease** (http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_what_is_alzheimers.asp) can result from gingivitis when the bacteria in the mouth spreads to the nerve channels or enters the bloodstream.

Respiratory Infections

The respiratory system can suffer as a result of poor oral health. Bacteria in the mouth from infected teeth and swollen gums can be breathed into the lungs or travel there through the bloodstream. Once there the bacteria can lead to respiratory infections, pneumonia, acute bronchitis, and even COPD.

Diabetes

Not only are diabetics already more susceptible to infection such as infected gums that lead to periodontal disease, but periodontal disease can in turn make diabetes more difficult to control. Symptoms can worsen as blood sugar levels go haywire because of gum disease. It is especially important for diabetics to take good care of their oral health to prevent complications with their disease. Because gum disease can lead to higher than normal blood sugar levels, a person with poor oral health is at an increased risk of developing diabetes.

Pregnancy Complications

It is imperative for expectant mothers to practice good oral hygiene. Hormonal changes in the body during pregnancy can cause a woman to develop oral infections much more easily. Any infection in the mother's body increases her risk of experiencing pregnancy complications. Oral health problems in the mother such as periodontitis and gingivitis have been known to lead to premature birth and low birth weight in infants. Gum disease puts both mother and baby at risk for experiencing serious health issues.

Infertility

There is a link between poor oral health and problems with infertility in women. Gum disease can lead to various overall health issues that can make it more difficult for a woman to conceive and sustain a healthy pregnancy. It can actually take longer for a woman with poor oral health to get pregnant than it would for a woman who has good dental health.

Erectile Dysfunction

Having poor oral hygiene puts a man at an increased risk for suffering from erectile dysfunction. Chronic periodontal disease is known to be related with ED. CPD is an infection that occurs when gums pull away from teeth, which creates pockets that carry bacteria and allows the bug to spread to the bone surrounding teeth. Bacteria from diseased gums can get into the bloodstream and cause blood vessels to become inflamed. This inflammation can block the flow of blood to the genitals, making erections more difficult or even impossible to achieve.

Cancer

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. Risk for kidney cancer, pancreatic cancer, and blood cancers is much higher for people who have poor oral health.

Kidney Disease

Chronic kidney disease is a serious health problem that affects the kidneys, heart, bones, and blood pressure. Infections in the body such as periodontal disease can lead to kidney disease. People with gum disease generally have weaker immune systems and are more

likely to acquire infections. Many people who suffer from very poor oral health also suffer from kidney disease. Kidney disease can be fatal if it leads to kidney failure or cardiovascular disease.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

According to the **National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society** (<http://www.nras.org.uk/>), people with gum disease were four times more likely to have Rheumatoid Arthritis. Both diseases have inflammation in common. The oral bacteria from gingivitis can increase inflammation throughout the body. This makes the risk for developing rheumatoid arthritis, a painful and debilitating inflammatory disease, much higher.

Prevention

The best way to prevent serious health issues caused by bad oral health is to practice good oral hygiene and schedule regular visits with your **Las Vegas dentist** (<https://www.absolutedental.com>).

To practice good oral hygiene:

- **Brush the teeth and gums for two minutes at least twice a day.**
- **Floss the teeth daily.**
- **Avoid smoking cigarettes or chewing tobacco products.**
- **Use toothpaste and mouthwash products that contain fluoride.**
- **Limit sugary foods and drinks.**
- **Eat a well-balanced diet for optimum nutrition.**

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.

Oral health is an indicator of overall health. Taking care to prevent oral health problems like gingivitis and periodontal disease can go a long way toward decreasing the risk for more serious health problems throughout the body.

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