

Health Bulletin



A Healthy Mouth May Help Prevent Heart Disease

(NAPSA)—When Americans think of a healthy heart, they may want to consider better ways to care for their gums.

That's because certain studies suggest a possible systematic link between periodontal disease and overall health including conditions such as coronary heart disease, diabetes and pre-term, low infant birth weight.

According to the American Dental Association's report prepared by independent experts entitled "Future of Dentistry," five longitudinal studies have shown that existing periodontitis, as diagnosed by a direct oral examination, shows excess risk for increased morbidity or mortality due to cardiovascular disease.

"The association between periodontal disease and conditions such as heart disease and diabetes has long been suspected," said Jan Lessem, M.D., Ph.D. "A new case study further explores the issue."

This topic has also been addressed in the Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health Care in 2000.

What is periodontal disease?

Periodontal disease, more commonly known as gum disease, is a serious chronic bacterial infection that attacks and destroys the gums and bone that hold your teeth in place. What many patients don't know is that periodontal disease may be linked to other serious medical conditions.

What can be done to prevent and treat periodontal disease? To reduce your risk, dentists recommend that you brush regularly,

TIPS TO HELP PREVENT PERIODONTAL DISEASE:

1. Visit your dentist regularly.
2. Brush your teeth well twice a day.
3. Use a soft-bristled toothbrush.
4. Use a toothpaste containing fluoride.
5. Clean between your teeth with floss or interdental cleaner.
6. Stop smoking.
7. Maintain a balanced and healthy diet.
8. Begin treatment immediately if you have been diagnosed with periodontitis.



floss and use mouthwash. Also recommended is drinking lots of water, eating healthier and visiting your dentist regularly.

If you have periodontal disease, new dental techniques and equipment and the better use of antibiotics are making treatment easier and more effective.

A deep cleaning procedure called scaling and root planing (SRP) is the traditional treatment for periodontal disease.

To get to hard-to-reach tartar beneath the gum line, a dentist uses a curette to probe and clean out the pockets formed around the tooth by receding gums. Then the dentist uses the curette to plane the tooth root to make the surface smooth.

Dental health professionals also use antibiotics with SRP to help eliminate bacteria. Studies show that the use of locally administered antibiotics, such as

ARESTIN™ (minocycline hcl 1mg) microspheres, in combination with scaling and root planing is more effective than SRP alone, possibly reducing the need for surgery.

A recent study published in the *Journal of Periodontology* has shown that using a combined treatment of Arestin plus scaling and root planing is more effective than scaling and root planing alone. The study examined 748 patients, age 30 or older with moderate to advanced periodontitis. Additionally, the study demonstrated that Arestin in combination with SRP was more effective in treating patients with cardiovascular disease and periodontal disease than SRP alone. Recently, dentists and hygienists have begun adding Arestin, in combination with SRP, to help fight periodontal disease.

Arestin is indicated as an adjunctive therapy to scaling and root planing (SRP) procedures for reduction of pocket depth in patients with adult periodontitis. Arestin contains minocycline, a tetracycline derivative, and therefore should not be used in children and in pregnant or nursing women. The use of drugs of the tetracycline class during tooth development may cause permanent discoloration of the teeth.

Tooth development occurs during pregnancy, and the use of tetracyclines during pregnancy could affect the color of the child's teeth later in life.

For more information on periodontal disease or Arestin, speak to your dentist or hygienist.