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ORAL HYGIENE IMPORTANT TO YOUR OVERALL HEALTH

Oral hygiene is the practice of keeping your mouth clean and disease free. It involves brushing, flossing your teeth as well as visiting your dentist regularly for dental x-rays, exams and cleaning. The inside of your mouth is the perfect environment for bacteria to grow and multiply: It is dark humid and warm. Most of the food we ingest provides nutrients for them to eat. In other words the food we eat acts as a surface or material on or from which oral bacteria lives, grows or obtain its nourishment.

When pathogenic (harmful) bacteria surround your teeth you are at risk of developing periodontal disease (gum disease) which is an infection and inflammation in the gums causing bone loss.

Such conditions in your mouth will definitely influence the rest of your body. A growing number of research and studies reveal that periodontal disease is closely associated with a range of health conditions: heart disease, diabetes, respiratory infections, rheumatoid arthritis, and dementia, to mention a few. Mechanisms and ways in which bacteria affect your overall health is poorly understood, research in that area is limited.

According to the Centers Of Disease Control And Prevention (CDC) in United States 47% of adults 30 years or older have some form of periodontal disease, in its early stages is called gingivitis. If it goes untreated it will turn into periodontitis a more serious form of the disease: bleeding gums, recession, teeth become loose or even fall out. With periodontitis bacteria and their toxins can move from the surface of your teeth into the bloodstream potentially affecting distant organs and systems. This can happen during flossing or if you have a cut or wound inside your mouth. Untreated inflammation inside your oral cavity can spread through the body; proteins causing that inflammation spread to distant organs and body systems.

Diabetes

Of all systemic illnesses this is the one that offers the biggest evidence between poor oral health and other disease. They seem to have a two-way relationship, periodontal disease seems to increase

the risk of diabetes and vice versa. Regarding this a number of research and studies are going on. The systemic inflammation caused by periodontal disease may worsen the body's ability to signal, process and respond to insulin. Treat periodontal disease and improve diabetes.

Cardiovascular Disease

Experts have concluded there is a strong link between periodontitis and heart attack, stroke and plaque build up in arteries. Researchers have not determined how poor oral health may lead to heart problems, Strong evidence suggest periodontal bacteria from the mouth may travel to the arteries via bloodstream playing a role in the development of the disease. In a 2012 study from the American Heart Association noted that inflammation of the gums has been associated with higher levels of inflammatory protein in blood that have been linked to poor oral health. Research suggest that good oral hygiene is linked to lower rates of heart disease.

Lung Disease (Pneumonia)

If large amounts of bacteria from the mouth are inhaled are settled in the lungs can cause pneumonia. This phenomenon have been observe mostly in bed ridden, hospitalized patients and older adults in nursing homes. This is a concern for those who can't floss or brush their teeth on their own. Preventive dental care, professional teeth cleaning can reduce considerably the risk of developing this kind of pneumonia.

Low Birth Weight (Pregnancy complications)

Researchers have found a close association between severe periodontal disease and low birth weight babies. In a 2019 study, researchers found that treating periodontal disease during pregnancy can improve birth weight and reduce the risk of preterm babies and fetal death. Oral bacteria could travel to the placenta potentially playing a role in chorioamnionitis (a serious infection of the placenta and amniotic fluid). This condition may cause early delivery or life threatening complications. Research suggest that bacteria from your mouth may trigger the activation of immune cells in your blood causing general inflammation and affecting the womb and causing distress to the placenta and fetus.

Dementia (Alzheimer's Disease)

During recent years a number of research have shown that bacteria found in the mouth have been identified in the brain tissue of patients with Alzheimer's. Oral bacteria specially those found in periodontitis can affect the brain directly or cause sever systemic inflammation reaching the brain and central nervous system. No evidence that oral bacteria alone can cause Alzheimer's, periodontal disease is one of the risk factors among many.

Periodontitis Linked To Other Conditions

Oral bacteria have been linked to other conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis, kidney and liver disease and some types of cancer (colorectal and breast cancers).

The plan

Prevention is the name of the game. Floss and brush 2 to 3 times a day, do it in that order. Visit your dentist twice a year for routine x rays, cleaning and check up. Flossing and brushing, make it a second nature for you.

Remember brothers and sisters Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ which strenghtenth me"