

## CVD— What's the Cost?

Cardiovascular disease (CVD)—including heart disease and stroke—causes the deaths of more American men and women, regardless of their race or ethnic background, than any other disease.<sup>6</sup>

What's more, CVD costs Americans billions of dollars each year—about \$300 billion—in health care treatments, medications, and lost productivity because of disability and death.<sup>6</sup>

### SOME TYPES OF CVD

- **Arteriosclerosis**  
(hardening of the arteries)
- **Coronary artery disease**  
(condition reducing blood flow through the coronary arteries)
- **Heart valve disease**  
(condition causing malfunction of heart valves)
- **Arrhythmia**  
(irregular heartbeat)
- **Hypertension**  
(high blood pressure)
- **Orthostatic hypotension**  
(sudden drop in blood pressure upon standing)
- **Endocarditis**  
(inflammation of the lining of the heart)
- **Heart failure**  
(cessation of heartbeat)

### CVD RISK FACTORS

- Age
- Diabetes mellitus
- High cholesterol
- Smoking
- Exposure to high levels of environmental noise
- Obesity
- Genetic factors/family history



## Oral Health & Your Heart

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a disease involving the heart and blood vessels. It's the No. 1 cause of death and disability in the United States today, with almost 700,000 Americans dying of heart disease each year.<sup>1</sup> That represents almost 29% of all deaths in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Heart disease and gum disease have several things in common. For example, inflammation is common in both cases, and inflammation can contribute to

**79.4 million**  
*Americans had one or more forms of CVD in 2004.<sup>5</sup>*

narrowing coronary arteries and breaking down the tissue that holds teeth in place.<sup>2</sup> Emerging research suggests a possible association between gum disease and CVD, as the oral bacteria of gum disease can enter the bloodstream and cause a defense reaction throughout the body.<sup>3,4</sup> Also, bacteria from the mouth can travel to important organs in the body, including the heart, and begin a new infection.<sup>4</sup>

Treating CVD depends on what form of the disease a patient has. The most effective treatments are always lifestyle changes. Whether CVD development is related to gum disease or not, keeping up with good brushing and flossing habits is essential.

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## If You're at Risk for CVD...

... see a physician and discuss proper ways to prevent it, as well as different possible treatments if you find out you have it.

Also, talk to your dentist or hygienist about gum disease and ask if it's a potential problem for you and your overall health.

Make sure you visit your medical and dental professionals on a regular basis to remain as healthy as possible.



### What You Can Do

#### A Healthy Diet Can Help Decrease Your Risk<sup>1</sup>:

- Keep your total cholesterol below 200 mg/dL
- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables
- Limit or eliminate extra salt or sodium
- Reduce the amount of saturated fat in your diet

### Reprints

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References are available at the Contemporary Oral Hygiene Web site.

## Surprise! Oral Health Could Affect Your Heart

Researchers have found that people with severe gum disease are almost twice as likely to suffer from some form of cardiovascular disease (CVD) as those without gum disease. Gum disease is caused by a bacterial infection in the mouth—specifically in the soft tissue that supports the teeth. When your body reacts to this infection, your gums become inflamed, they may bleed, and in severe cases, your teeth may become loose.

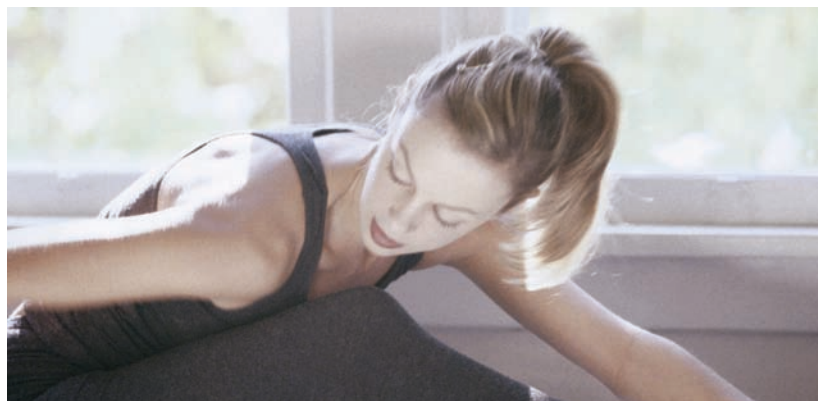
The earliest form of gum disease is called gingivitis and the most severe is periodontal disease. When bacteria infect your mouth, inflammation results as your body fights the infection. Systemic inflammation has been shown to be associated with an increased risk of CVD.

Preventing gum disease and the accumulation of bacteria in the mouth by brushing and flossing twice a day—as well as seeing your dentist and dental hygienist on a regular basis—could ultimately be one way to also help prevent CVD problems.

**In 2004, more than 147,000 Americans killed by CVD were under 65 years of age.<sup>5</sup>**

### 5 Tips to Help Prevent Cardiovascular Problems

1. Abstinence from tobacco use
2. Cardiovascular exercise (aerobics); talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program
3. Healthy eating habits
4. Some medications (discuss with your doctor)
5. Aspirin therapy (talk to your doctor before starting any new medication program)



### Disclaimer

*The content of this guide is for information purposes only. It does not substitute for the dentist's professional assessment based on the individual patient's case.*