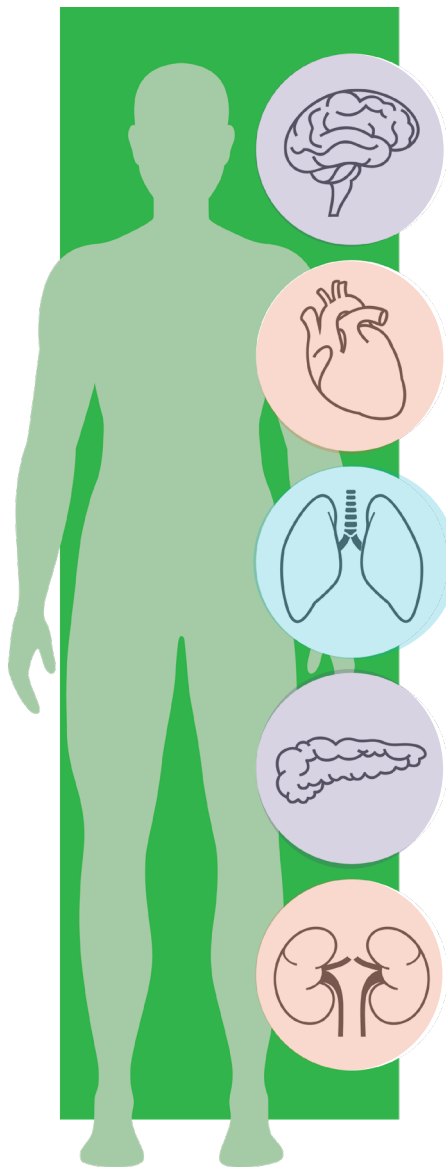


Good Health Starts in Your Mouth

How oral health and hygiene affects overall health



Brain and Neck • Did you know gum disease may increase the risk of stroke? Extensive research shows that harmful bacteria in the mouth can make your body susceptible to developing blood clots and eventually increase the chance of a stroke. Head and neck radiation are also related to oral health. The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research encourages patients to see a dentist before beginning cancer treatments since a common side effect of head and neck radiation is an increase in cavities.

Heart • The American Heart Association advocates that good oral health is an important factor in reducing the risk for infective endocarditis, a potentially deadly heart infection. In fact, those with gum disease are almost twice as likely to suffer from heart disease as those with healthy gums. Your mouth can carry more than food nutrients into your body: Poor oral hygiene may cause bacteria to be transported to your blood and subsequently your heart.

Lungs • Poor oral health can keep you from breathing easily by promoting the growth of harmful bacteria that may be transported to the lungs. This bacteria can cause pneumonia and bronchitis, and is especially hazardous for those who are already experiencing respiratory illnesses.

Pancreas • Know a diabetic? These friends and family members are at greater risk for periodontal disease due to the symbiotic relationship with diabetes. Gum disease may disrupt the control of blood sugars and consequently increase the likelihood of serious complications such as heart and lung diseases. However, studies strongly indicate that when diabetics receive more frequent professional teeth cleanings, their blood glucose levels are much better controlled.

Kidneys • Bacteria often enters the body through the mouth. With poor oral care, infections progress faster and can lead to inflammation throughout the body and a higher risk of kidney disease.

Pregnancy and Oral Health • High maternal levels of the bacteria that causes cavities may contribute to low infant birth weight.

Oral Health and Your Immune System • Brushing twice a day and having teeth cleaned professionally on a regular basis helps lower the risk that bacteria will enter the bloodstream and create infection. This is especially important for those who have existing health conditions or compromised immune systems such as people with HIV positive status and patients undergoing dialysis, chemotherapy, radiation, organ (or stem cell) transplants.

Brush. Floss. Visit your dentist. Be Better.

Learn more at DeltaDentalTN.com

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Your Dentist is a Disease Detective

Your dentist can detect signs of more than 120 diseases—including cancer, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, and osteoporosis—through a routine oral exam. And since many people visit their dentist more frequently than their primary-care physician, dentists are in a unique position to detect those diseases. That's why routine dental care is important for general wellness.

Regular dental visits can prevent many oral health problems or help identify them earlier when treatment may be simpler and more affordable.¹ In fact, **every dollar you spend on preventive care, such as brushing and dental cleanings, may save you money later in restorative care and emergency procedures.**²

Dentists can act as disease detectives by simply examining your mouth, head and neck for signs and symptoms that may point to more serious health issues. During routine checkups, dentists not only look for cavities and gum disease, but also monitor symptoms like breath odor, unexplained sores and tooth erosion. If certain signs are detected, dentists can urge patients to seek medical attention to help better manage their oral health and overall health. Dentists are at the forefront of saving lives, as more than 90 percent of common diseases have oral symptoms and can be detected in the dental chair.³

Health problems with oral signs:⁴

- **Anemia:** Burning, fiery red tongue, swelling of the corners of mouth or pale gums.
- **Anorexia:** nervosa and bulimia: Erosion of tooth enamel, fillings raised above the eroded tooth surfaces, sensitive teeth, enlarged parotid glands and sweetbreath aroma.
- **Deficient:** immune system (HIV positive): Thrush mouth, unexplained sores, nonremovable white areas on the sides of the tongue.
- **Diabetes:** Dry mouth, distinctive breath odor, burning tongue, high rate of tooth decay, inflammation and infections in the mouth.
- **Heart disease:** Pain radiating to the jaw.
- **Kidney failure:** Retarded tooth development in children, dry mouth, odor, metallic taste and ulcers on the tongue and gums.

¹ American Dental Association, "Common Questions About Going to the Dentist," web.

² Delta Dental Plans Association, "Stay Healthy and Save Money with Preventive Dental Care," web.

³ Academy of General Dentistry, "Warning Signs in the Mouth Can Save Lives," web.

⁴ James W. Little et al., *Dental Management of the Medically Compromised Patient* (St. Louis: Mosby, 2012). 3. Steven L. Bricker et al., *Oral Diagnosis, Oral Medicine and Treatment Planning* (Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1994).