

Periodontal Health Is Important for Men, Too!

Men already have a lot to worry about when it comes to health; they face shorter life spans, greater risk of heart attacks, and higher rates of cancer than women. One more thing can be added to that list: research shows that periodontal disease is more prevalent in men than women, and men lose more teeth on average than women!

Men's periodontal health may be poorer than women's due to their lack of action when it comes to oral hygiene. Research published in the *Journal of Periodontology* found that women are almost twice as likely as men to have received a regular dental check-up in the past year, and women were more likely than men to schedule suggested treatment following those dental check-ups. Furthermore, men have worse indicators of periodontal health than women, including higher incidence of dental plaque, tartar, and bleeding on probing. This may be because women are three times more likely to floss every day than men.

A man's health may be uniquely impacted by periodontal disease as well. Periodontal disease can lead to tooth loss and has been linked to heart disease, diabetes, and other inflammatory conditions. Research has suggested that the following conditions may be associated with periodontal disease in men, making it important that men diligently maintain periodontal health.

Prostate-Specific Antigen

Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) is an enzyme created in the prostate that is normally secreted in very small amounts. However, when the prostate becomes inflamed, infected, or affected by cancer, PSA levels rise. Research has shown that men with indicators of periodontal disease (including bleeding on probing) as well as prostatitis (inflammation of the prostate) have higher levels of PSA than men with only one of the conditions. This means that prostate health may affect periodontal health, and vice versa, similar to the relationship between periodontal disease and diabetes.

The American Academy of Periodontology Patient Page is a public service of the AAP and should not be used as a substitute for the care and advice of your personal periodontist. There may be variations in treatment that your periodontist will recommend based on individual facts and circumstances. Visit perio.org to assess your risk and for more information on periodontal disease.

Heart disease

Research indicates that periodontal disease and cardiovascular disease are associated; having periodontal disease may actually increase your risk of cardiovascular disease. This may be because both conditions are chronic inflammatory conditions, and researchers believe that inflammation provides the basis for the connection between gum disease and heart disease. Since men are already more likely to develop heart disease than women, maintaining periodontal health may be another way to reduce this risk.

Impotence

Men with periodontal disease, especially those younger than 30 or older than 70, are at increased risk of developing impotence, according to research presented at a 2012 meeting of the American Urological Association. Researchers believe that inflammation may be the link between the two conditions; prolonged chronic inflammation (the same type of inflammation that is associated with periodontal disease and other inflammatory conditions) can cause damage to blood vessels which can lead to impotence.

Cancer

Research published in the June 2008 issue of *The Lancet Oncology* found that men with a history of gum disease are 14% more likely to develop cancer than men with healthy gums. Specifically, men with periodontal disease may be 49% more likely than women to develop kidney cancer, 54% more likely to develop pancreatic cancer, and 30% more likely to develop blood cancers.

Men: you can help prevent these serious conditions, including periodontal disease, by ensuring that your oral health is at its best every day! Take proper care of your teeth and gums by brushing your teeth twice each day, flossing at least once each day, and seeing your dental professional for regular cleanings and an annual Comprehensive Periodontal Evaluation.



What's a CPE?

A CPE, or Comprehensive Periodontal Evaluation, is a way for your dental professional to assess your periodontal health by examining your teeth, plaque, gums, bite, bone structure, and any risk factors you may have. By assessing your oral health on an annual basis, you and your dental professional will know how healthy your mouth is, and will be better able to notice any conditions, such as periodontal disease, that may need additional treatment. Be sure to add an annual CPE to your current oral health routine!