

TALKING POINTS:

Whole Body Health Requires Oral Health



Respiratory System (Lungs) ^{1,2,3}

- » The surfaces in the mouth and throat, including the teeth, can harbour bacteria. These bacteria can be inhaled into the lungs where they may contribute to respiratory infections. This phenomenon has been observed in certain populations such as institutionalized frail elders.



Reproductive System (Pregnancy) ^{8,9,10}

- » Preventive dental hygiene care and a proper oral hygiene regimen at home are safe during pregnancy, and may improve maternal oral health.
- » Research suggests that, in some populations, pregnant women who have gum disease may be at greater risk for certain pregnancy complications, such as preterm birth; however, further research is needed.



Endocrine System (Diabetes) ^{4,5,6}

- » Periodontitis (a type of gum disease) is a common chronic condition involving an infection of the gums that surround and support the teeth. It can worsen over time if left untreated, and may increase the risk of developing diabetes mellitus.
- » Research suggests that gum disease contributes to inflammation in the body, making clients with diabetes more resistant to insulin. Research also suggests that treating gum disease in people with diabetes may assist in lowering blood sugar levels (a small improvement).



Growth & Development ^{11,12}

- » Overall growth and development may be affected by conditions of the oral cavity. For example, cleft lip and palate disorders in infants may cause difficulty feeding, breathing, speaking, and swallowing, and may increase susceptibility for repeated respiratory infections.



Side Effects of Some Therapies ^{13,14}

- » Radiation and chemotherapy may cause oral complications such as oral mucositis (mouth ulcers and inflammation).
- » Many medications prescribed for the treatment of chronic diseases may cause oral dryness; some drugs used to treat heart disease and seizures can cause the overgrowth of the gums. For a detailed description of medication-related oral implications, refer to: www.cdha.ca/e-cps



Cardiovascular System (Heart & Blood Vessels) ⁷

- » Evidence shows that there may be a link between chronic gum disease and cardiovascular disease (heart and blood vessel disease). Research suggests that the treatment for gum disease, which reduces bacteria levels and infection and controls inflammation, may play a role in the prevention of heart disease; however, more research is needed to better understand this association.

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