



The connection between gum health and your heart

When people think of heart health, it's likely that exercise, cholesterol and blood pressure come to mind. But there's one area that doesn't get as much attention—your mouth.

Your mouth is a doorway to your entire body.¹ The health of your mouth, teeth and gums can affect your overall health. Oral bacteria can make their way into the blood stream and to all points of your body, but most importantly, your heart.

Bacteria from your mouth can cause an infection of your heart's inner lining.² It has also been found in the clogged arteries and blood clots of people who have had heart attacks.¹



Recognize the symptoms

Taking care of your oral health should be a priority, especially if you have:¹

- ⊕ Red, swollen, sore gums
- ⊕ Pus or other signs of infection
- ⊕ Loose teeth
- ⊕ Gums that bleed when you eat, brush or floss
- ⊕ Bad breath or a bad taste in your mouth

Take care of your mouth

Regular attention to your teeth and gums pays off in more ways than just having a winning smile. Be sure to:²

- ⊕ Brush your teeth and gums twice daily
- ⊕ Use a soft-bristled toothbrush and replace it every three-to-four months
- ⊕ Floss daily, rubbing between teeth below the gumline
- ⊕ Use a mouthwash to help kill bacteria and reduce plaque
- ⊕ Use a water flosser for an extra layer of deep cleaning
- ⊕ Schedule regular dental visits
- ⊕ Limit foods and drinks with added sugar
- ⊕ Don't smoke or use tobacco

And when you're exhausted and want to skip your dental routine to go straight to bed, think again. The food particles and sugar that gather throughout the day are a feast for bacteria. You're setting yourself up for cavities and more.⁴

If that's not enough of a motivator, remember your heart. Gum disease may be connected with high blood pressure.² And the risk of developing cardiovascular disease has also been associated with poor oral health.⁴

Brushing is a small price to pay for a healthy, beautiful smile. Keeping your heart healthy is an even better motivator. *And that, you can take to heart.*

Learn how Teladoc Health can help support you on your wellness journey.
To sign up or learn more, go to [TeladocHealth.com/Smile](https://www.TeladocHealth.com/Smile).

¹<https://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/gum-disease-and-heart-health-probing-the-link>

²<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/oral-health>

³<https://www.ada.org/resources/ada-library/oral-health-topics/oral-systemic-health>

⁴<https://www.health.harvard.edu/topics/dental-health>