

Getting to the Heart of It

Oral Health's Connection to Heart Health

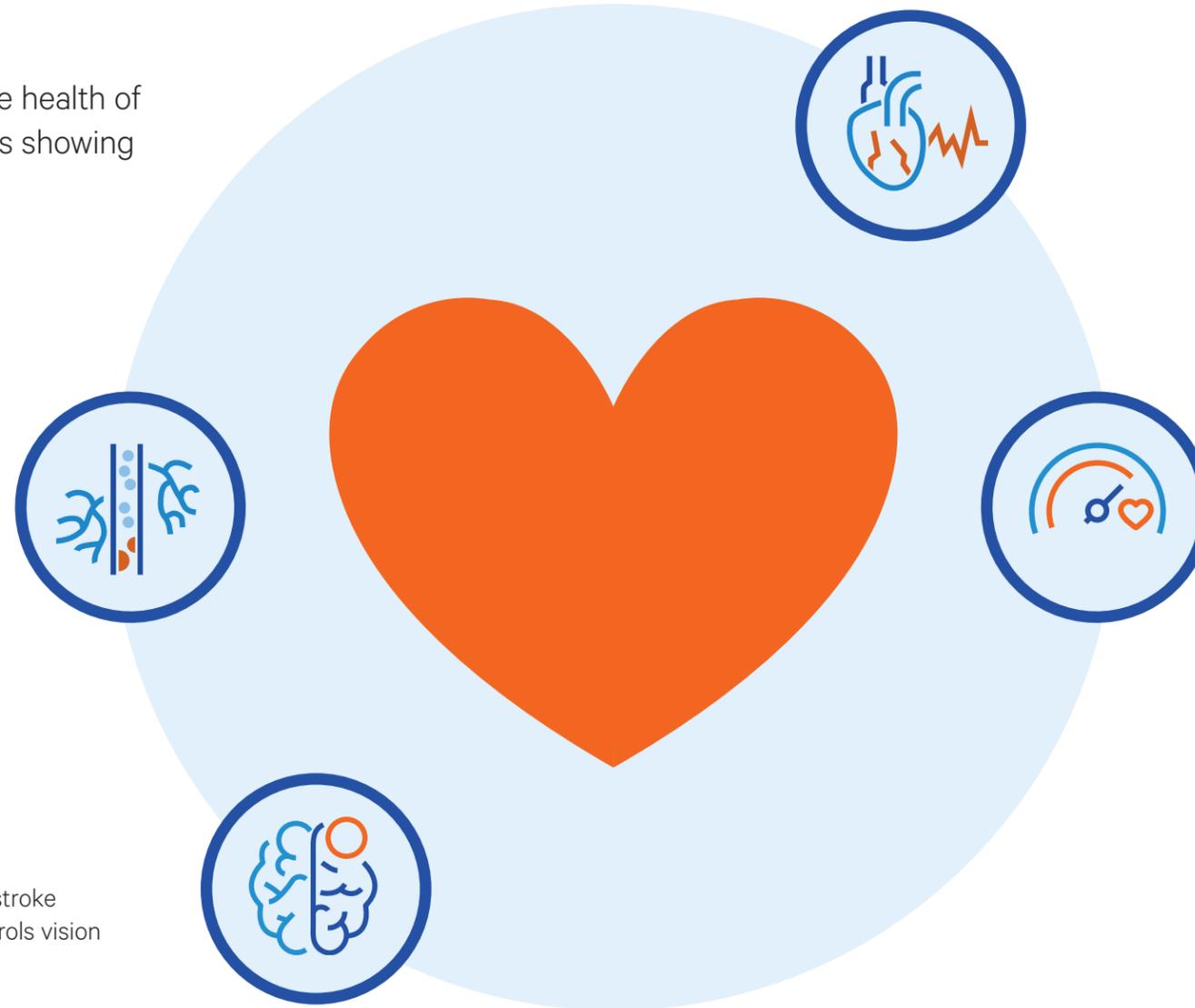
Growing evidence connects a healthy mouth with the health of your heart and circulatory system. Here are examples showing why oral health is about much more than a smile.

Cardiovascular Disease

- Researchers report that tooth decay and other oral infections in children can contribute directly to atherosclerosis in adulthood—a disease in which the inner wall of the arteries become clogged with plaque. The authors of a 2019 study concluded that “childhood oral infections may be a modifiable risk factor for adult cardiovascular disease.”¹

Stroke

- People with gum disease are 3 times more likely to have a stroke involving blood vessels in the back of the brain, which controls vision and other bodily functions.²



Heart Attack

- Researchers found that the odds of having a first heart attack were 28% higher for people with periodontal (gum) disease than for those without this disease.³
- Evidence suggests that people with a high level of C-reactive protein (CRP) in the blood have a greater risk of heart attack. Studies have shown that patients with periodontal disease also have higher circulating levels of CRP than those without periodontal disease.⁴

Blood Pressure

- Those who delayed dental care during their teens and early adult years are more likely to be diagnosed with high blood pressure.⁵
- In a study about efforts to treat blood pressure and keep it under control, the authors wrote that “the severity of periodontal disease affects the odds of treatment failure.”⁶

Sources

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