Impacts Beyond the Mouth

Growing evidence connects a healthy mouth with a healthy body. Here are some examples showing why oral health is about much more than a smile:

High Blood Pressure

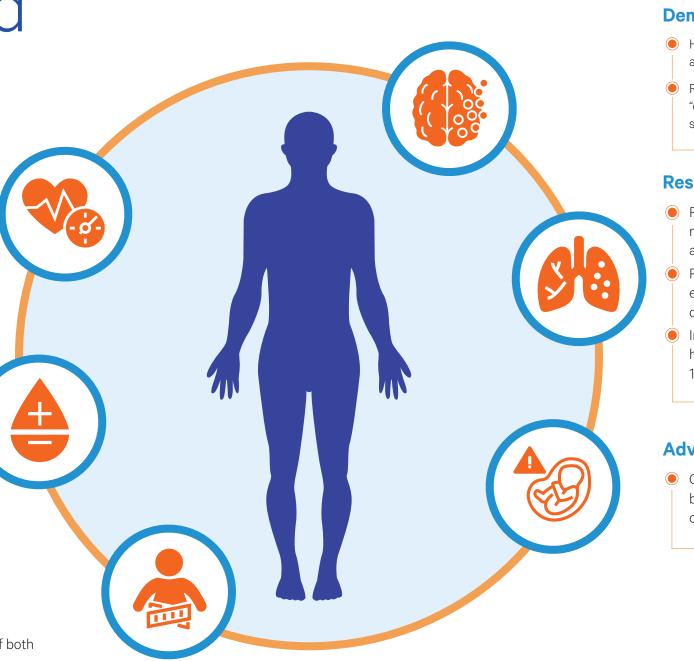
- Putting off dental care during early adulthood is linked to an increased risk of having high blood pressure.¹
- Patients with gum disease are less likely to keep their blood pressure under control with medication than are those with good oral health.²

Diabetes

- Untreated gum disease makes it harder for people with diabetes to manage their blood glucose levels.³
- Diabetes raises the risk of developing gum disease by 86%.⁴

Obesity

- Brushing teeth no more than once per day was linked with the development of obesity.⁵
- Frequent consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks raises the risk of both obesity⁶ and tooth decay among children⁷ and adults.⁸



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Dementia

 Having 10 years of chronic gum disease (periodontitis) was associated with a higher risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.⁹

Researchers report that uncontrolled periodontal disease "could trigger or exacerbate" the neuroinflammatory phenomenon seen in Alzheimer's disease.¹⁰

Respiratory Health

 Research shows that improving oral hygiene among medically fragile seniors can reduce the death rate from aspiration pneumonia.¹¹

Patients with ventilator-associated pneumonia (VAP) who engaged in regular toothbrushing spent significantly less time on mechanical ventilation than other VAP patients.¹²

Improving veterans' oral hygiene reduced the incidence of hospital-acquired pneumonia (HAP) by 92%, preventing about 136 HAP cases and saving 24 lives.¹³

Adverse Birth Outcomes

Gum disease among pregnant women is associated with preterm births, low birthweight babies and preeclampsia, a pregnancy complication that can cause organ damage and can be fatal.¹⁴



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Suggested Citation:

CareQuest Institute for Oral Health. Impacts Beyond the Mouth. Boston, MA; June 2020. DOI: 10.35565/CQI.2020.4002

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