

Oral Health: The Importance of Oral Care and Its Effect on the Body

Why is Oral Care Important?

By having consistent oral care (brushing, flossing, and regular dental appointments) individuals are able to avoid complications such as cavities, tooth loss, and gum disease. Many of these problems are often overlooked and progress further eventually causing a dental emergency. By taking preventative care, one can prevent emergency dental situations from occurring that can be very costly and time consuming to the individual.

Lack of oral care doesn't just cause cavities and gum disease, it can also cause higher level damage to the rest of the body. Research has found that oral care has a direct link to several other diseases/complications throughout the body. This is due to **gum disease** which can progress into later stages called **periodontal disease** that cause **bone and tooth loss**. Studies show that the bacteria in gum disease are able to affect various parts of the body, not just the mouth. Preventative care is the key to having both a healthy mouth and body.

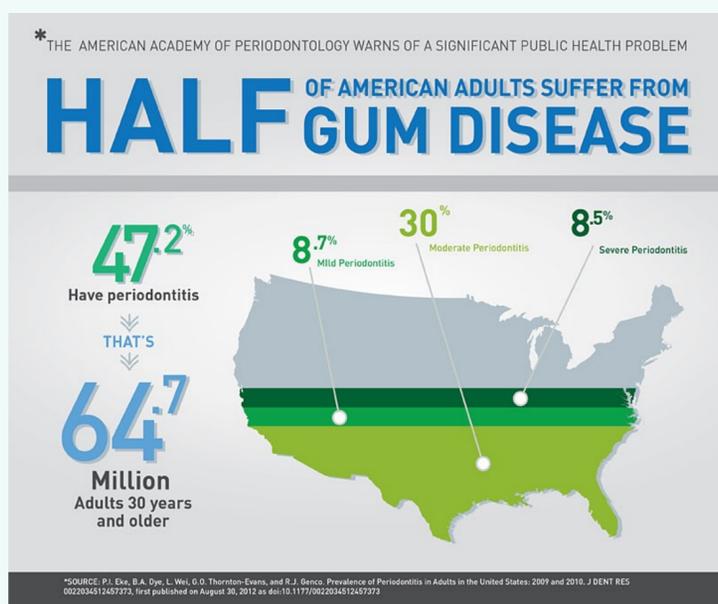


How Much Does Emergency Care Cost?

On average, Americans are spending an average of \$749 on emergency hospital visits due to dental problems. The cost is much higher for **seniors 65+** at an average of **\$1,350 per visit**.¹⁴

What Types of Diseases are Involved with Poor Oral Care?

- Diabetes
- Pneumonia
- Heart Attacks
- Stroke
- Cancer
- Dementia



[Half of Americans Suffer from Periodontal Disease]

Approximately 70.1% of adults in the United States ages 65+ have periodontal disease⁶

Those who are 65+ years old must take regular precautions in their oral care routines. Periodontal disease is the main cause of tooth and bone loss but can also cause complications throughout the body.

Diabetes

Advanced gum disease can increase insulin levels, making it harder for diabetics to control their diabetes.³

Pneumonia

- Bacteria from gum disease can be inhaled causing aspiration pneumonia.^{1,10}
- Complications from pneumonia include the following:⁴
 - respiratory failure
 - sepsis (widespread inflammation of the body), which can lead to organ failure

Heart Attack/Stroke

- Individuals with gum disease have nearly a 50% increase risk for having a heart attack.⁵
- Those with periodontal disease can have up to 4 times higher risk of having a stroke.⁹

Cancer

- Studies show that patients with severe periodontal disease have a 24% increase risk of cancer.^{8,13}

Dementia

- New study shows that gum disease increases risk of developing dementia.^{7,11}
 - Bacteria found in gum disease have been found in excess amounts in patients' brains with dementia.

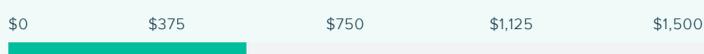
Emergency Care Cost* vs Preventative Care Cost

*average cost for adults ages 65 and older

National Average Cost of Emergency Hospital Visits Due to Dental Problems ¹⁴ : **\$1,350**



National Average Cost of Regular Dental Visits In a Year ¹² (includes 2 cleanings, 2 x-rays, 2 dental examinations): **\$550**



What can be done?

Brushing and Flossing



Brushing at least twice a day for two minutes is a great way of preventing plaque buildup in the teeth which in turn prevents gum disease. Individuals should floss at least once a day to remove plaque around the gum line that causes gum infections.

Regular Dental Appointments



Individuals should visit their local dentist at least twice a year (every 6 months). Regular dental cleanings and examinations can prevent gum disease and tooth loss but also aid in the diagnosis of oral cancer.

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