

## The link between your oral health and your systemic health

Periodontal Inflammatory Disease can have a negative impact on your overall health. The increased inflammatory response in the body caused by Periodontitis is associated with other systemic diseases such as Cardiovascular Disease, diabetes, and other autoimmune diseases. Treatments such as prescription drugs and chemotherapy can also increase susceptibility to Periodontal Inflammatory Disease. Awareness of these inter-relationships can help us determine better treatment and prevention.

### Cardiovascular Disease

Research has shown that people with Periodontal Disease have a higher risk of developing Heart Disease. Cardiovascular Disease develops when plaque builds up in the walls of the arteries obstructing proper blood flow. Bacteria found in the oral cavity can be a direct link to clot formation in the arteries. When oral bacteria displaces from the mouth and enters the bloodstream it can attach to the plaque. This further obstructs the proper passage of blood, leaving the heart lacking in nutrients and oxygen. Inflammation caused by Periodontal Disease has also been linked to rapid clot formation. Proper oral treatment of patients with Heart Disease has been shown to lower blood pressure and increase overall health.

### Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy treatments leave cancer patients susceptible to oral bacterial infections. This is due to a condition called Neutropenia - characterized by a lack of Neutrophils (a type of white blood cells). We can think of Neutrophils as the EMTs of white blood cells; they are the first responders to bacterial infection. If we lack those cells we can be exposed to bacterial infections without even knowing they are present. Another side effect of chemotherapy is dry mouth which causes cavities.



**Jonathan Richter D.D.S., F.A.G.D** is a noted dentist with a dual dental degree in Periodontal Prosthesis and Fixed Prosthodontics. He received his general dental degree from New York University College of Dentistry. He then received his dual specialty degree from the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Richter provides comprehensive holistic dentistry because he believes in the importance of preserving your natural teeth. He is also one of the select few dual specialists in the tri-state area. Dr. Richter places a heavy emphasis on prevention through wellness and holistic approaches. His main focus is on the effects that preventative dentistry can have on the patient's overall systemic and integrative health. His experience and knowledge of systemic medical and dental inter-relationships allows him to devise the best treatment plan for each individual patient.

**Please call our office  
for your consultation.**

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# Cardiodontal®

*A Place For Dental Wellness  
"Dentistry For Health"*



**Understanding  
The Relationship  
Between Periodontal  
Inflammatory Disease and  
Your Systemic Health**

The Oral Systemic Link



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## What is Periodontal Inflammatory Disease?

Untreated gingivitis can advance to Periodontitis, an inflammatory response caused by bacterial infection. Gum recession due to Periodontal Disease can be aggravated by dry mouth (xerostomia) and tooth position which can cause severe dental caries and root decay. Bacterial toxins cause the breakdown of bone and connective tissue that hold the tooth in place. The gums eventually pull away from the teeth causing spaces called “pockets.”

## What are the symptoms of Periodontal Disease?

- Red, swollen and bleeding gums (healthy gum tissue does not bleed)
- Loose teeth
- Spaces between your teeth
- Tender gums and sensitivity
- Gums that pull away from your teeth (receding), making your teeth appear longer than normal
- Bad breath that will not go away

## Common Risk Factors include:

- Gingivitis that occurs due to poor oral health habits that can directly lead to Periodontal Disease
- Drug induced Xerostomia (dry mouth)
- Compromised immunity (Rheumatoid Arthritis, Type I Diabetes, Scleroderma, Sjögren's Syndrome...)
- Oral and Systemic pH imbalance
- Smoking
- Poor nutrition
- Malocclusion - poor tooth alignment
- Clenching and grinding
- Lack of coordinated care between your dentist and your health care provider

## Pregnancy

Hormonal changes caused by pregnancy can make women extremely susceptible to Periodontal Disease. Studies have shown that these women often test positive to periodontal pathogens. Pregnant women with untreated Periodontal Disease have been linked to complications such as premature birth and underweight babies. Research has shown that periodontal infection can increase fluid levels in pregnant women and induce premature labor. When this occurs, babies are born before they are fully developed. In addition, many women crave sugary sweets during pregnancy, leading to gestational diabetes, which contributes to other precursors of Periodontal Disease.

## Diabetes

A metabolic disorder that is caused when a person has very high blood sugar due to insufficient insulin production, lack of body response to the insulin produced, or a combination of both. Diabetes is considered to be at epidemic proportions in the US. Gum Disease is considered a major complication of diabetes. Diabetics have a decreased ability to fight bacteria that causes Gum Disease. Eventually, untreated Gum Disease turns to Periodontal Disease. Untreated diabetes also causes slow healing and increases the risk of infection after dental surgery.

## Rheumatoid Arthritis

An autoimmune disease that is caused by an immune system dysfunction. It shares inflammation with Periodontal Disease as a symptom. Inflammation is a common protective response to bacteria and viral infections. However, in the case of Periodontitis the persistent inflammation causes bone and tissue loss. Patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis have a hard time maintaining good oral hygiene when the disease affects the joints of the hand. The resulting pain makes it difficult for patients to brush their teeth which, in turn, increases the likelihood of Gum Disease and Periodontal Inflammatory Disease occurring.

## Xerostomia (Dry Mouth)

A condition characterized by low function of the salivary glands, commonly caused by the use of prescription drugs. Dry mouth leads to a propensity for cavities and root decay. These symptoms can negatively impact patients with Periodontal Inflammatory Disease. Sjögren's syndrome, an autoimmune disease, is characterized by the destruction of salivary and tear producing glands causing xerostomia.

## How can the Cardiodental concept help manage your overall health?

Our office is based on the single premise that preventative oral care has an impact on your overall well-being. We believe in integrative care where we work hand in hand with your healthcare provider to maximize general wellness. We are determined to provide our patients with the latest technologies, the most safe, natural, and least invasive approaches to dental care.

Our state-of-the-art office provides the following:

- Personalized oral systemic and natural dental care for the entire family
- A friendly staff dual-trained to embrace each patient's biochemical makeup
- Mercury free-Biocompatible BPA free fillings
- Digital X-Rays
- Alternative Dental Implants (Titanium vs. Zirconium)
- Oral cancer screening (Velscope)
- Custom preventative programs

For patients with complex medical issues, we have a full time L.P.N. on staff who coordinates your dental treatment with your physicians. Our office will contact your doctor regarding your treatment plan and request all pertinent lab work (i.e I.N.R levels, blood thinners and medication for heart disease and diabetes) be forwarded prior to dental surgery. Our office is comfortable treating patients with sedation dentistry.