

Oral Health and Heart Health



Problems in your mouth can affect the rest of your body and people with gum disease may be at risk of heart disease.



Reduce the risk of gum disease and bacterial endocarditis by practicing good oral hygiene habits daily.



Your oral health is important. Research has shown that poor oral hygiene is a risk factor in causing heart infection (*endocarditis*).

DHF
Dental Health
Foundation
Ireland

TAKING CARE OF YOUR GUMS MAY HELP YOUR HEART

Tooth Tips

- Brush your teeth twice a day, at bedtime and one other time.
- Use a soft/medium toothbrush, spit, don't rinse after brushing.
- Brush for 2-3 mins using a gentle circular motion.
- Floss daily to reduce plaque build-up, and/or use interdental brushes. Ask your dental team for advice on technique.
- Change your toothbrush every 3 months or when bristles are worn.
- Use a fluoride toothpaste (for adults 1,450ppm).
- If your gums bleed when you brush, you may have gum disease. Talk to your dentist.

Diet and Heart Tips

- Small diet changes can make a big difference, eat more fruit and vegetables.
- Choose healthy snacks and drinks between meals such as whole fruits, limiting sugary drinks and snacks to mealtimes. Water and low-fat milk are the most suitable drinks. Avoid fizzy energy drinks.
- Smoking, alcohol and stress are risk factors for severe gum disease, heart diseases and stroke. Increased physical activity may help relieve stress.
- Sugar-free gum increases saliva and can help relieve dry mouth caused by blood pressure medication. Choose sugar-free medicine when available.

Things to Consider

- Visit your dental team at least once a year for advice and a checkup (even if you have no teeth of your own) to prevent gum disease, tooth decay, bad breath, and endocarditis. Tell them if you have a heart condition.
- Ask your dentist/doctor for advice on ways to reduce the risk of oral and heart disease.
- For further heart health information & support: www.irishheart.ie