

# Oral Health and Systemic Diseases

## Connection of Oral Conditions to Systemic Diseases - Tooth Body Connection

This is an excerpt from the book “Seven Steps to Dental Health: A Holistic Guide for Mouth and Body” by Max Haroon. A presentation based on this information was presented to Total Health Show in 2016.



**Systemic** means affecting the entire body, rather than a single organ, body part or a system, some such systemic disorders and diseases are diabetes and Cardio Vascular Diseases. A gum disease appears to be a local infection of the gum, but the infection can spread through blood and can become systemic infected.

Recently, it has been recognized that oral infection, especially periodontitis, may affect the course and pathogenesis of a number of systemic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, bacterial pneumonia, diabetes mellitus, and low birth weight. The mouth can become a port of entry for infection and site of transmission of infectious microbes. The bacteria can migrate to the lungs, digestive tract and other organs. In one recent study, people with serious gum disease were 40% more likely to have a chronic condition.

Infection and inflammation in the mouth have been linked to a variety of systemic conditions and conversely these systemic conditions can cause oral infection. We will look at the following seven systemic conditions:

### 1. Heart Diseases

The association of Periodontal disease with most of the Cardio Vascular Diseases (CVD) has been well established for some time. The inflammation caused by gum disease increases plaque build-up, contributing to the swelling of the arteries. Inflammation can also cause problems in the rest of the body. It is estimated that 90% of heart attacks are caused by oral pathogens.

### 2. Diabetes

Diabetics are at higher risk for developing infections, including gum diseases. Gum disease can increase insulin resistance, thereby affecting glycemic (blood sugar) control. As per the previous section about acidity/sugar, high blood sugar provides ideal conditions for infection to grow, which can cause gum disease or aggravate it. Periodontal disease has been named as the sixth complication of diabetes.

### 3. Osteoporosis in Women

Bone loss in osteoporosis is also associated with gum disease and oral bone. Estrogen deficiency (in Menopause) and osteoporosis speed the progression of oral bone loss, which could lead to tooth loss.

### 4. Pancreatic Cancer

Researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute found that gum disease *may* be associated with an increased risk of cancer of the pancreas. Research shows men with periodontal disease had a 63% higher risk of developing pancreatic cancer compared to those reporting no periodontal disease.

### 5. Respiratory Conditions

Gum disease increases bacteria in the mouth. Inhaling germ-filled droplets from the mouth and throat into the lungs may cause bacterial infections. People suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (COPD) typically lack protective systems, making it difficult to eliminate bacteria from the lungs. Patients with

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respiratory diseases are more at risk for pneumonia (due to the presence of cariogenic bacteria plus periodontal pathogens in their oral cavity). Elderly, who are unable to perform oral care are more at risk. Imagine how much health care cost can be saved, if all nursing home staff are trained to provide oral-care.

### 6. Kidney Disease

Patients with Kidney disease are considered an “at risk” population and are more prone to infections. One of the symptoms of kidney disease is dry mouth, which is due to reduction of saliva production, which results in diminishing cleansing of bacteria, allowing bacteria to increase. This could potentially lead to the development of gingivitis and gum disease. This is a good example of systemic disease affecting dental condition.

### 7. Pregnancy Condition

Studies indicate approximately 50% of women experience some degree of pregnancy gingivitis. Dental tumours, although a rare condition, are seen in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester. The tumour is a painless lesion that develops in response to plaque. Pre-term delivery could be caused by periodontal gum disease and so is low-birth weight of babies born to mothers with severe gum disease.

Oral health is the most overlooked health issue in conventional and integrative medicine, but there is also some good News: It's possible to reverse cancer, digestive disorders and even diabetes by properly eliminating oral infections. Autoimmune disorders can also be resolved by getting rid of toxic dental materials.

Some diseases have oral symptoms (not necessarily caused by oral diseases) so these indicators can be used as good diagnostics tool (more on the subject in Chapter 10). The Academy of General Dentistry estimates that more than 90 percent of all systemic diseases have oral manifestations.

I wish you holistic dental health.

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### Author

**Max Haroon, Max Haroon**, a social entrepreneur and an author is a retired IT and e-Marketing specialist, who always has been interested in holistic health and alternative medicine. He is the founder of the Society of Internet Professionals, [www.sipgroup.org](http://www.sipgroup.org) and Life Transformation Institute [www.life-transformation-institute.org](http://www.life-transformation-institute.org)

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