

Periodontist Melbourne - Your Gums A Predictor of Heart Disease

The area that doctors and researchers are studying very carefully is chronic inflammation. In fact, chronic inflammation may very well be the common link to all of the chronic degenerative diseases, arthritis, heart disease, some forms of cancer, and periodontal disease to name just a few. I mention periodontal disease, because as a periodontist, that is what I see on a frequent basis.

Periodontal disease is that disease which causes a loss of the supporting bone for the teeth. Also known as pyorrhea and gum disease, periodontal disease robs the person of his or her teeth, resulting in loss of mouth function, loss of support of the facial tissues, and discomfort in eating.

So why bring this up in this column. The facts are changing in regard to this disease. For years, we have emphasized controlling plaque. You know—Floss your teeth, brush your teeth. "But you showed me how to floss my teeth last time!" Well, get even more used to the lecture, because we have even more information that links gum disease to overall disease. Your body's immune response to plaque in your mouth results in chronic inflammation. That chronic inflammation not only destroys the bone supporting your teeth, it also destroys tissues all over the body. Yes, that's right, all over the body.

But if you think that's all, just hang on here a little longer. While plaque is necessary in the start of periodontal disease, there are other factors that will worsen it and worsen the chronic inflammation in the rest of your body. What is that, pray tell? NUTRITION !!! In fact, nutrition can play a positive or a negative role depending on how positively or negatively you eat. You already know what the bad things are, highly processed food, fast food. Have you ever seen what a McDonald's hamburger looks like 4 years after it's cooked. I have one. It looks exactly the same as when I bought it, bun included. I'll show you. How good is that for you?

The American Heart Association recommends 4-5 servings a day of fresh vegetables and 4-5 servings a day of fresh fruits on a 2000 calorie diet. Yes, that means 8-10 servings (a serving is usually a half cup of a dense fruit or vegetable or a full cup of a leafy vegetable) of delicious fruits and vegetables. That will reduce your risk of heart disease, and it will also reduce your risk of other degenerative diseases, including periodontal disease.

"But I take my vitamins," you say. Sorry. Vitamins don't cut it. A multivitamin has generously 50-75 nutrients in it. A whole fruit or vegetable — over 12,000 nutrients that have been identified already. Some studies on vitamins A, C, and E were stopped because those people taking the vitamins were doing worse than those who weren't.

Whole foods is the answer. And there are also whole foods supplements that you may take to help.

So, just before you brush and floss, have an apple, eat some grapes, dip some carrots in peanut butter (unprocessed). Eat the good foods. They may save more than your teeth.

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