

## If you're at risk for CVD, what you can do

- See a physician and discuss proper ways to prevent it.
- Talk to your dentist or hygienist about gum disease and ask if it is a potential problem for you and your overall health.
- Make sure you visit your medical and dental professionals on a regular basis.



## A healthy diet can help decrease your risk<sup>5</sup>:

- Keep your total cholesterol below 5mmol/l(190 mg/dl).
- Food should be varied, and energy intake must be adjusted to maintain ideal body weight.
- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Reduce the amount of saturated fat in your diet (foods like butter, cream and cheese contain high proportion of saturated fat).

## 4 tips to help prevent cardiovascular problems<sup>5</sup>

1. Stop smoking.
2. Increase physical activity (talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program).
3. Make healthy food choices.
4. If necessary, take medication (discuss with your doctor).

## 4 steps to help prevent gum disease, good oral hygiene measures are essential

1. Brush twice daily with a soft bristle brush.
2. Use a fluoridated toothpaste with antibacterial and/or anti-inflammatory properties.
3. Clean daily between teeth (dental floss or interdental toothbrush).
4. Visit your dentist regularly (at least twice per year).

### References

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## Oral health could affect your heart

Research suggests that people with severe gum disease may be more likely to suffer from cardiovascular disease (CVD)<sup>1</sup>. Gum disease is caused by a bacterial infection in the mouth - specifically adjacent to or within the soft tissue that supports the teeth. When your body reacts to this infection, your gums become inflamed, they may bleed, and in severe cases, your teeth may become loose.

The earliest form of gum disease is called gingivitis and the more severe is periodontitis. When oral bacteria are not properly removed from around your teeth, local inflammation results as your body fights the infection. Early research suggests a possible link between Systemic Inflammation and CVD.

### To maintain good oral health, what you can do

- Prevent gum disease and accumulation of bacteria in the mouth by brushing and flossing twice a day.
- See your dentist and dental hygienist on a regular basis, especially if you have symptoms of gum disease such as: bleeding, bad breath, gum retraction, tenderness in the gums, and tooth mobility.

## Is there a link between Gum Disease and Heart Disease?

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a disease involving the heart and blood vessels.

Heart disease and gum disease have several things in common. One of them is inflammation, which in the case of CVD narrows coronary arteries and in the case of severe gum disease breaks down the tissues that hold teeth in place<sup>2</sup>. Emerging research suggests a possible association between gum disease and CVD, as the oral bacteria of gum disease can enter the bloodstream and cause a defense reaction throughout the body<sup>2,3</sup>. Also, bacteria from the mouth can travel to important organs in the body, including the heart<sup>1,3</sup>.



Treating CVD depends on what form of the disease a patient has and always should depend on appropriate medical intervention. However, the most effective preventive measures are always lifestyle changes, which among others include good oral hygiene habits, keeping a healthy diet, exercising and not smoking.

## CVD Risk Factors

- Age
- Diabetes mellitus
- High cholesterol
- Smoking
- Hypertension
- Obesity
- Genetic factors/family history

## Some Types of CVD

- **Atherosclerosis** (hardening of the arteries).
- **Coronary artery disease** (condition reducing blood flow through the coronary arteries ).
- **Heart valve disease** (condition causing malfunction of heart valves).
- **Arrhythmia** (irregular heartbeat).
- **Hypertension** (high blood pressure).
- **Orthostatic hypotension** (sudden drop in blood pressure upon standing).
- **Endocarditis** (inflammation of the lining of the heart).
- **Heart failure:** Heart pump function impairment.

## CVD- Incidence & Cost <sup>4</sup>

- **CVD:** main cause of death and of years of life lost in Europe and in the European Union (EU).
- CVD causes 42% of all deaths in the EU, each year 1,9 millions persons die of CVD.
- Overall cost in EU : e169 billion a year.