



Link between Systemic Diseases and Periodontal Health: A Complete Review

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Description

Oral health is an integral part of overall health and recent research has shed light on the profound relationship between periodontal health and various systemic diseases. Periodontal disease, a chronic inflammatory condition affecting the gums and supporting structures of the teeth, has been linked to several systemic conditions, including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, respiratory infections and even adverse pregnancy outcomes. Gingivitis is the early stage of periodontal disease and is characterized by redness, swelling and bleeding of the gums, often caused by the accumulation of plaque and bacteria along the gumline. Gingivitis is reversible with proper oral hygiene. When gingivitis is left untreated, it can progress to periodontitis, where the infection spreads deeper into the tissues, causing loss of the bone and ligaments that hold the teeth in place. Periodontitis is associated with more severe consequences, including tooth mobility and loss. Chronic inflammation plays a central role in the development and progression of periodontal disease. As the bacteria in dental plaque release toxins, the body's immune system responds with inflammation, which, if uncontrolled, can lead to tissue destruction and impact systemic health.

Numerous studies have established a connection between periodontal disease and various systemic diseases. The inflammatory nature of periodontal disease is thought to be the main mechanism through which it influences overall health. The bacteria from infected gums can enter the bloodstream, potentially affecting different organs and systems. Below are some of the key systemic diseases that are linked to periodontal health. There is a well-documented association between periodontal disease and cardiovascular diseases, such as heart disease, stroke and atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries). Research suggests that the chronic inflammation caused by periodontal disease may contribute to the development and progression of cardiovascular conditions. The bacteria from the gums can enter the bloodstream and contribute to the formation of arterial plaques. These plaques can narrow and block blood vessels, leading to cardiovascular issues such as heart attacks and strokes. Additionally, the inflammatory molecules released by the body in response to periodontal infection can further promote inflammation in blood vessels, increasing the risk of atherosclerosis. A number of studies have shown that individuals with periodontitis are at higher risk of developing heart disease and stroke. For example, the American Heart Association has acknowledged the potential link between periodontal disease and heart disease, though more research is needed to fully understand the extent of the relationship.

Conclusion

The connection between systemic diseases and periodontal health is a complex and evolving area of research. It is clear that maintaining good oral health is not only important for preventing dental problems but also for reducing the risk of systemic diseases. Regular dental care, good oral hygiene practices and management of systemic conditions are key to preserving both oral and overall health. As more research uncovers the intricate relationships between oral and systemic health, it becomes increasingly evident that periodontal care should be integrated into the broader healthcare landscape to improve patient outcomes.

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