

## Use Your Toothbrush To Fight Cancer

Some of the most important tools you can employ to lower your risk of cancer are a toothbrush and dental floss. Use them properly and you may lower your chances of early cancer death by up to 80 percent.

For years now, the medical community has known about the critical influence that oral health can have on the rest of your body. However, many people still do not quite realize how vital healthy teeth and gums really are. That's why one recent observational study published online in the *British Medical Journal Open* grabbed my attention: Not only does it add substantiation to this important connection between dental and overall health, but it proposes that the consequences of periodontitis (gum disease) could in fact be *far* more severe than you may ever have imagined. The data suggest that poor oral hygiene can increase the risks of early cancer death by up to 80 percent.

In this study, Swedish researchers found that there is a significant link between excessive dental plaque bacteria and premature cancer death. Higher levels of bacteria correlated with increased risks of dying up to 13 years earlier than normally expected. Scientists assert that further studies are required to prove a direct causal relationship between oral health and cancer, but other studies present similar findings and suggest a strong correlation. Some experts claim that one in five cancers are caused by chronic inflammation and bacterial infections — which are the primary cause of periodontitis (gum disease) and poor oral health.

In another study, researchers from the State University of New York examined the gum health of 266 patients who were diagnosed with and treated for head and neck cancer over the past 10 years, along with 207 controls. Doctors determined the presence of gum disease by measuring each patient's amount of alveolar bone loss — the bone that comprises the tooth socket — as visible through X-ray. Results showed that for each millimeter of alveolar bone lost, a subject's risk of head and neck cancer was a shocking *four times higher*. What's worse, the link was found to be *independent* of high-risk lifestyle factors, such as tobacco use or alcohol.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time oral health has been linked to a deadly condition. The relationship between oral health and heart disease, for example, is well-documented. Oral infectious agents can enter the circulation and negatively affect the heart and cardiovascular systems. This is why individuals with heart valve diseases have to take prophylactic antibiotics. Recent data further suggest a strong correlation between inflammation, periodontal disease and cardiovascular diseases.

### **Natural Solutions To Prevent Gum Disease and Protect Overall Health**

One good way to prevent gum disease is simply to improve your dental hygiene through regular brushing and flossing. A nutrient-dense, whole-foods diet can help reduce inflammation, improve oral health and reduce infection. Above all, stay away from those sweets and soft drinks. Good hydration will also help control dental plaque. Natural supplements, botanicals and nutrients, used both orally and topically as mouthwashes, help to keep inflammation and infections at bay. You will be surprised how quickly poor oral health can be reversed with these simple methods.

One published peer-reviewed study demonstrated the ability of a [Tibetan-based botanical formula](#), to *substantially* reduce inflammation of the root and gums. How can a simple herbal formula at low dosages have such a profound effect? It is due to its well-researched ability to regulate inflammation, support circulation and strengthen the immune system — all critical properties that have been documented in numerous published studies.

Another natural compound shown to improve oral hygiene through its ability to reduce inflammation and control infection is the botanical extract honokiol. This active compound is derived from the bark of *Magnolia officinalis* tree and has been widely researched for its potent anti-cancer, antioxidant, antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory effects, among other benefits. Specific nutrients and antioxidants such as vitamins C, E, A, D-3 and Coenzyme Q10 are also helpful to improve dental health, reduce inflammation and infection while boosting immunity. Green tea and calendula both help to reduce inflammation and free-radical damage while fighting bacterial infections.

These supplements can be taken orally, and they are often used in natural mouthwashes as well. Look for a mouthwash without fluoride that includes some or all of these natural ingredients.

### **The Big Picture**

The health of your mouth closely correlates with the health of the rest of your body, but conventional dentistry and allopathic medicine seem only recently to have begun relating oral health to overall wellness and longevity. However, ongoing research continues to connect poor oral and dental health with a number of chronic conditions, highlighting these direct relationships. The good news is that many natural-health solutions that protect and promote oral and dental health also address a number of other critical areas, including heart health, cellular health, immunity and overall vitality. By being aware of these vital connections and taking the extra steps to maintain good oral hygiene, we can also protect and promote our overall vitality on numerous levels, naturally.