

# WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOUR GUMS, CAN BE GOOD FOR YOUR HEART



**Learning about gum disease can help your heart stay healthy.**

**Did you know that people with gum disease may be at increased risk for heart disease?\*** And inflammatory substances (the natural response your body has to infection) can build up in the blood stream, making heart disease worse.\*\*

## **Better health starts with your mouth**

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States.\*\*\* The good news is that you can help your heart and reduce your risk of gum disease by brushing and flossing every day.

You may not notice gum disease right away. So be sure to visit your dentist for an exam and cleaning twice a year, or as your dentist recommends. Even if you think you're doing a good job brushing and flossing, plaque can still remain in your mouth. And plaque can harden into a more dangerous substance called tartar. Only a dental professional can remove the tartar and plaque you may miss at home.

## **Aim for heart-healthy gums**

It's simple.

- › Brush twice a day
- › Floss once a day, preferably at night, because brushing doesn't clean between teeth
- › Get regular dental checkups

## **Warning signs for gum disease**

- › Red, swollen or tender gums
- › Bleeding while brushing or flossing
- › Gums that pull away from the teeth
- › Loose or separating teeth
- › Bad breath that doesn't go away

\* American Academy of Periodontology. Gum Disease and Heart Disease. (n.d.). Retrieved December 23, 2016, from [https://www.perio.org/consumer/heart\\_disease](https://www.perio.org/consumer/heart_disease)

\*\* Harvard Health Blog. Treating gum disease may lessen the burden of heart disease, diabetes, other conditions. (2014, July 23). Retrieved December 23, 2016, from <http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/treating-gum-disease-may-lessen-burden-heart-disease-diabetes-conditions-201407237293>

\*\*\* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Leading Causes of Death", October 7, 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/leading-causes-of-death.htm>.

**Together, all the way.®**



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