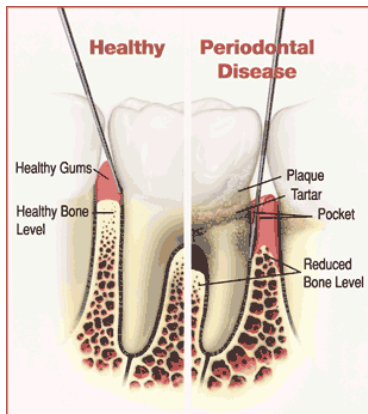




Going to the Dentist Can Help Prevent Heart Disease

Plano, TX - February ushers in American Heart Month, a time to cherish sweethearts, candy hearts, paper hearts, and most importantly your own beating heart. While diet, exercise, and not smoking are front and center in a good heart health plan, you should also add regular dental check ups to prevent gum disease bacteria that could cause serious cardiovascular problems.



"Frequently in consultations with all of my patients I discuss the dangerous link between heart disease and gum disease so that they can alert their family members and friends to the importance of regular dental check ups", comments Plano Dentist Dr. Ritchie Beougher *"As an instructor at New York University and Palm Beach College I must stay current on the latest research and dental advancements, including new studies related to gum disease."*

In world-wide studies, researchers found that people with advanced gum disease, a serious bacterial infection that destroys the attachment fibers and supporting bone that hold your teeth in your mouth, also had a 25% to 100% increased risk of suffering from a heart attack than those without advanced gum disease.

Dr. Beougher sees a need for a more integrated dental-medical approach in preventing and treating cardiovascular disease. He notes the mounting evidence published in journals such as the *Journal of the American Dental Association (JADA)*, *Journal of Periodontology* published by The American Academy of Periodontology (AAP), and other respected dental organizations linking oral health and heart disease:

- A poor oral health diagnosis was a stronger predictor of heart disease than other markers, such as high levels of fibrinogen (a clotting factor), low HDL ("good") cholesterol or high triglycerides.
- The more teeth people have lost, the greater their risk of cardiovascular problems.
- Older adults who have higher than normal amounts of gum disease bacteria also tend to have thicker carotid arteries.
- The presence of gum disease may increase the risk of a second heart attack in people with a history of heart disease.

- Researchers found an increased risk of coronary heart disease for people below the age of 60 who have more than four millimeters of alveolar bone loss (the bone that holds the teeth in the mouth) from periodontal disease.



Dr. Beougher wants to see more education and publicity about the links between gum disease and heart health so that more people will schedule a regular dental care program which he says will lower their risks of gum disease and improve their overall health.

Dr. Beougher points out that gum disease affects 80 percent of American adults, according to the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD). Signs include bleeding or swollen gums, bad breath, sores in the mouth and receding gums, among other symptoms. Dr. Beougher says you can prevent plaque buildup and minimize your chance of developing gum disease by brushing and flossing and visiting your dentist regularly.

Dr. Beougher acknowledges that the long term pay-off in regard to overall health and even medical expenses is well worth the investment. For example, he cites a recent study released by Aetna and Columbia University College of Dental Medicine in which periodontal care appears to have a positive effect on the cost of medical care, with earlier treatments resulting in a lower medical costs for members with coronary artery disease, diabetes, and stroke.

If you have heart disease, Dr. Beougher suggests you talk to your dentist about your heart condition and share your complete medical history, including medications. It is important to follow your physician's and dentist's instructions about health care, including using prescription medications, such as antibiotics, as directed.

Celebrating 20 years this fall, Dr. Beougher and Willow Bend Dental, located at 3001 N. Dallas Parkway, Plano, offers three dental practices in one – general, cosmetic, and children's dentistry.

Dr. Ritchie Beougher is among an elite group of cosmetic dentists who personally sculpt patients' new smiles. His "Smilelift" technique is recognized across the country and he now teaches the procedure at New York University and Palm Beach College.

For more information about Dr Ritchie Beougher and Willow Bend Dental call 972-964-5686 or visit www.WillowBendDental.com.

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