



American Heart Association.

Healthy Smiles, Healthy Hearts™

CONNECTION

**Oral-Heart
Connection:
The Inside
Scoop**

**What Your
Dental Team
Knows About
Your Heart**

**From Gums
to Arteries:
Stay Healthy
Inside & Out**

*Keep Your Smile Healthy,
Keep Your Heart Strong*

*Find Out How Oral Health
Impacts Heart Health*

*8 Easy Habits for
a Healthier You*



Delta Dental is proud to collaborate with the American Heart Association's Healthy Smiles, Healthy Hearts initiative.

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A Winning Team for Your Overall Health



Your dentist is part of your health care team.

Healthy teeth and gums are connected to your overall health—including your heart.

Dentists and hygienists can spot warning signs in your mouth of other health conditions, and work closely with your doctors to help protect your total well-being.

How your dental team supports your health:

- Spotting gum disease that may affect your heart.
- Treating gum disease to help reduce inflammation linked to heart problems.
- Some dental teams check blood pressure to support heart health.
- Encouraging healthy habits for overall wellness, along with your health care team.



Every visit to your dentist is another step toward protecting your heart and maintaining long-term wellness. By including your dental care in your overall health routine, you're giving yourself the best chance at a healthier, longer life.

Why a Healthy Smile Matters



Your mouth is a window to your health.

Your mouth is both a gateway and mirror of your overall health. It affects your whole body.

Germs can cause decay, infection, and inflammation that spread beyond your mouth. They may reach your heart and may lead to health issues such as high blood pressure.



**PROTECTING YOUR SMILE
PROTECTS YOUR HEART.**

Did You Know?

3X the Risk

Leaving tooth infections untreated can almost triple your risk of heart problems.

Bleeding Gums

are a sign of inflammation that can harm your heart.

A Healthy Mouth

means a healthy heart. Daily care helps protect both.

Daily Habits That Protect Your Mouth and Heart

**BRUSH
2X A DAY**

Prevention starts with what you do every day.

The health of your mouth and heart are connected. The good news is, there's a lot you can do every day to protect both. Small, consistent habits add up to big benefits.

- ✓ Brush teeth twice a day for 2 minutes with fluoride toothpaste.
- ✓ Floss once a day.
- ✓ Brush your tongue.
- ✓ Eat more fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins.
- ✓ Check your blood pressure regularly to spot early signs of problems.
- ✓ Limit sugar and ultra-processed foods.
- ✓ Quit smoking, vaping or using tobacco.
- ✓ Take medications as prescribed.
- ✓ Visit your dentist and doctor regularly.
- ✓ Talk about the oral and heart health connection with your health care team.



**LITTLE ACTIONS YOU TAKE EVERY DAY CAN
ADD UP TO BETTER OVERALL HEALTH.**



**FLOSS
DAILY**



**HEALTHY
EATING**



**TAKE
MEDS**



**DENTAL
VISITS**

Health Tips for Every Stage and Situation

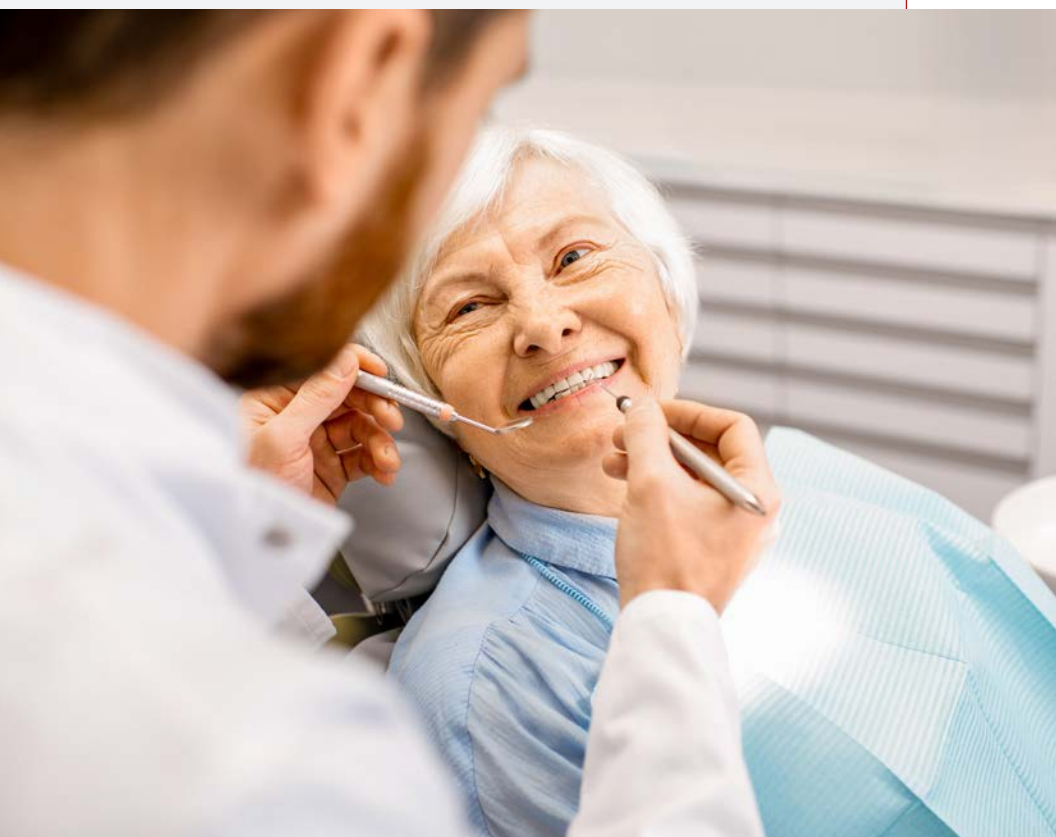
Some life stages and conditions require extra care.

Whether you're older, managing a health condition, or expecting a baby, these simple steps can help keep you healthy.

Older Adults:

- Drink water often.
- Ask your dentist about dry mouth relief.
- Get a yearly dental checkup, even with dentures.

Staying on top of oral care lowers your risk of infections that can strain the heart.





Chronic Conditions (diabetes, obesity, heart disease):

- Share your health information with your care team.
- Eat balanced meals and skip tobacco and alcohol.
- Follow your health care team's plan.

Managing your gums helps manage your health—and supports your heart.



Pregnancy:

- Tell your dentist you're expecting.
- If morning sickness causes you to be sick, rinse with baking soda water (diluted solution of 1 cup water and 1 teaspoon of baking soda) to protect your teeth.
- Limit sugary snacks and drinks.

Healthy gums during pregnancy protect both your heart and your baby's health.

Oral-Heart Connection

Germs in your mouth can travel
through your bloodstream.

When your gums are swollen, red, or bleed easily, that's called inflammation. It means your body is fighting off germs.

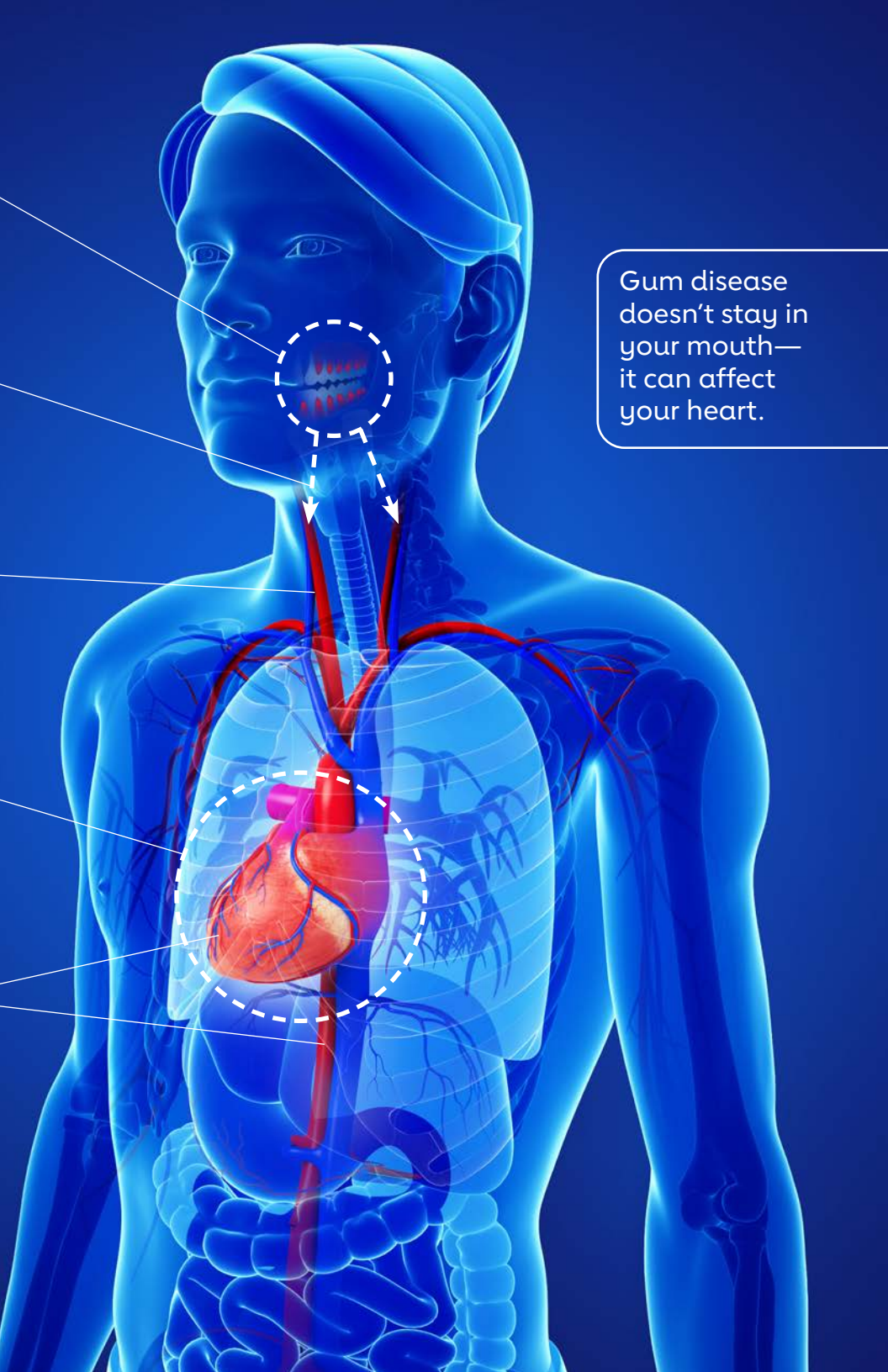
But if your mouth stays inflamed for a long time, those tiny germs and chemicals from the inflammation can get into your bloodstream.

Once they're in your blood, they can make your blood vessels (the tubes that carry blood) tighter or damaged.

When your blood vessels get tight or blocked, it's harder for blood to flow. That makes your heart work harder, which can raise your blood pressure.

Gum disease or other mouth problems don't just stay in your mouth. They can affect your whole body, even your heart.





Gum disease
doesn't stay in
your mouth—
it can affect
your heart.

Know Your Numbers, Protect Your Health

Healthy gums and healthy blood pressure work together to protect your heart.

Blood pressure measures the force of blood pushing against your blood vessel walls.

When it's too high (hypertension), your risk of heart attack, stroke, and other serious conditions increases.

Did You Know?

Nearly 50%

of U.S. adults have high blood pressure, and many don't know it.

Diabetes & Obesity

are conditions that can worsen oral health problems.

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic mm Hg (upper number)		Diastolic mm Hg (lower number)
Normal	Less than 120	and	Less than 80
Elevated	120-129	and	Less than 80
Stage 1 Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)	130-139	or	80-89
Stage 2 Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)	140 or higher	or	90 or higher
Severe Hypertension *Without symptoms: call your doctor	Higher than 180	and/or	Higher than 120
Hypertension Emergency *With symptoms: call 911	Higher than 180	and/or	Higher than 120

*Chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness, weakness, change in vision, or difficulty speaking

How to Take Your Blood Pressure the Right Way

Before You Measure

No smoking, caffeine, alcohol or exercise 30 minutes prior. Empty your bladder and sit quietly for more than 5 minutes.

Placement Matters

Place the bottom of the cuff above the bend in the elbow. Wrap it against bare skin, not over clothing.

Proper Positioning

Sit in a chair with a back, feet on the floor and legs uncrossed. Rest your arm on a flat surface at heart level.

Use the Right Device

A cuff device is the most accurate way to check blood pressure. Make sure it's a validated device.* Check the cuff size and fit.

Check. Record. Repeat.

Stay relaxed, and don't talk while you measure. Record all the results to share with your doctor.

Take
at least

2

blood pressure
readings

1

minute
apart each

*Check [Health.org/OralHealth](https://www.health.org/oralhealth) for a list of validated devices.

Make Every Appointment Count



Planning ahead means better care for you.

Before Your Visit:

- Make a list of your medications (including over-the-counter and supplements).
- Write down any symptoms or changes in your oral health (bleeding gums, dry mouth).
- Note questions about your heart and oral health.
- Bring your home blood pressure log.



During Your Visit:

- Share your oral health habits and concerns.
- Ask how your oral health may affect your heart or other conditions you may have.
- Discuss any medication side effects that affect your mouth.

After Your Visit:

- Follow up on any referrals.
- Update your care team on medication or symptom changes.
- Set-up and track your next appointments.

Get the Answers You Need



Ask Your Dental Team

- Are there signs in my mouth that point to other health problems?
- What should I do if my gums bleed while I'm brushing?
- Are there dental treatments that may affect my blood pressure or heart?
- Should I schedule a follow-up with my doctor?

Ask Your Medical Team

- How often should I get my blood pressure checked?
- What screenings do I need based on my age, medical history and family risk factors?
- Can my medication(s) affect my mouth?
- How often should I share updates from my dental visits with you?

Use this space to jot down questions, test results or reminders from your visit. _____

More Ways to Stay Healthy



The American Heart Association's Life's Essential 8™ can help improve your overall health.

Beyond your daily habits, here are 8 big areas that shape your long-term heart and overall health

1. Eat Better – Choose whole foods and limit sugar.
2. Be More Active – Aim for 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week.
3. Quit Tobacco – Avoid all forms, including vaping.
4. Get Healthy Sleep – Ideally 7–9 hours a night.
5. Manage Weight – Balance calories and exercise.
6. Control Cholesterol – Monitor regularly.
7. Manage Blood Sugar – Especially if you have diabetes.
8. Manage Blood Pressure – Keep it under 120/80.



Change Starts with One Small Step

Little actions you take can add up to better health.

Even the smallest actions can lead to big health improvements. Try one of the following:

- Brush before bed tonight.
- Schedule a dental check-up, even if it's been a while.
- Replace your toothbrush if it's over 3 months old.
- Drink water instead of soda at your next meal.
- Limit your sugar intake to lower risk of tooth decay.
- Write down one small step you can take today.

My small step today is:





American Heart Association®

Healthy Smiles, Healthy Hearts™

**Healthy smiles.
Strong hearts.
Better lives.**



Learn more at [Heart.org/OralHealth](https://heart.org/OralHealth)



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