

Heart Disease Linked To Periodontitis

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People suffering from periodontitis—a chronic inflammatory bacterial infection of the gums—had an increased risk for heart disease (electrocardiographic abnormalities or ECG) according to a recent study published in the *Journal of Periodontology*.

Japanese researchers examined general and oral health of 1,111 people and included 957 people who had greater or equal to 10 teeth and did not have a medical history of cardiovascular disease. “We found that people with deep periodontal pockets with a mean value greater than two millimeters had an increased risk for ECG abnormalities compared with people who had pockets with a mean value less than two millimeters. And, people with severe attachment loss with a mean value greater than 2.5 millimeters had a significant risk for ECG abnormalities.” said Dr. Yoshihiro Shimazaki, Department of Preventive Dentistry, Kyushu University Faculty of Dental Science, Japan. “The results observed in this study suggest a relationship between periodontitis and cardiovascular disease.” Past studies report that periodontitis results in higher systemic levels of C-reactive protein (CRP), interleukin-6 and neutrophils, suggesting that elevated levels of these inflammatory substances increases the risk of cardiac events.

“This study adds to the growing body of evidence that links periodontitis to cardiovascular disease,” said Michael P. Rethman, D.D.S., M.S., president of the American Academy of Periodontology. “In order to examine the degree of cardiovascular risk from periodontitis compared with other risk factors, further studies are required. For example, because problematical ECG results are a widely appreciated risk factor for cardiovascular disease, it could be clinically valuable to know the effects of periodontal treatment on ECG exams.”

Because ECG examinations cause no discomfort and take only a few minutes, they are widely used to screen for heart disease in health examinations. ECG abnormalities are significantly related to subsequent death from coronary heart disease and one of the most sensitive predictors of fatal coronary heart disease.

Comprehensive periodontal therapy is provided by dental specialists (periodontists) who are graduates of three-year residencies that they undertake after graduating from dental school. General dentists and dental hygienists can also provide periodontal care. Root planning and scaling is the most widely accepted and conservative treatment for moderate to severe periodontal

A free brochure titled *Ask Your Periodontist About Periodontal Disease and Heart Disease* is available by calling 800-FLOSS-EM or online at www.perio.org.

What this article means : The bottom line is that there has been a clinically established direct link between chronic periodontal disease and cardio vascular diseases. Stop the periodontal disease from progressing or getting established and have a healthier heart and arteries. Dr. Schleicher