

Good Oral Health Leads to Better Overall Health

The connection is clear: Patients who take care of their teeth and visit a dentist regularly tend to be in better overall health. For example, the treatment of periodontal disease may help control blood sugar levels in diabetics, cut the risk of delivering a preterm, low-birthweight baby, and limit the severity of heart disease.¹

How Healthy Is Your Mouth?

Answer this questionnaire to find out.

| | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Do you brush your teeth less than once per day and floss less than several times per week? | Yes | No |
| 2. Do your gums bleed when you brush your teeth? | Yes | No |
| 3. Has it been longer than a year since your last dental visit? | Yes | No |
| 4. Are you diabetic? | Yes | No |
| 5. Have you had more than two fillings placed in the past two years? | Yes | No |
| 6. Do you prefer eating sweets to eating fruits and vegetables? | Yes | No |
| 7. Do you take medications that may cause a dry mouth? | Yes | No |
| 8. Do you smoke and/or have more than two alcoholic drinks per day? | Yes | No |

A higher number of “Yes” answers to these questions may mean you’re at greater risk of developing oral health problems, which can impact your overall health and make controlling certain conditions more difficult.

(continued)

Why It's Important

The questions on page 1 describe important habits that can keep your mouth healthy and identifies risk factors that can lead to poor oral health. Following these habits and recognizing the warning signs can help you stay healthy.

How Oral Health Affects Certain Conditions

Your oral health can affect health conditions, such as:

- **Heart Disease**—Researchers have linked increased bacteria in oral plaque to the increase of the same bacteria in arteries leading to the heart.¹
- **Diabetes**—People with diabetes, especially when uncontrolled, are more likely to have periodontal disease than those without the condition, and periodontal disease can increase blood sugar.²
- **Pregnancy**—Pregnant women with periodontal disease are more likely to give birth to premature babies.³

| Healthy Habits | Risk Factors |
|---|--|
| <p>Following these habits can improve your oral health and reduce your risk of periodontal disease, tooth decay, and oral cancer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brush your teeth twice per day and floss daily.• Visit the dentist regularly.• Eat a well-balanced diet.• Avoid smoking and having more than two alcoholic drinks per day. | <p>Being aware of these risk factors can help you prevent or manage an oral health problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bleeding gums• Diabetes• Frequent fillings or crowns• Taking medications that reduce saliva |

How Dental Blue® Helps

Our Dental Blue plans give you the tools, resources, and comprehensive coverage to help keep your mouth healthy. As a member, you enjoy:

- Preventive visits to the dentist at no cost to you*
- Access to one of the largest dental networks nationwide
- Enhanced Dental Benefits

*Check your plan benefits for details.

Enhanced Dental Benefits

Our condition-specific total health solution helps members with qualifying medical conditions, such as those listed above, manage their oral and overall health. We identify members who may benefit from oral health interventions and provide additional, specific support, including full coverage for preventive and non-surgical periodontal services that have been connected to improved overall health.

To see if you qualify for Enhanced Dental Benefits, call Member Service at the number on the front of your ID card.

Schedule Your Regular Dental Checkup.

You can search for in-network dentists using our Find a Doctor tool at bluecrossma.com/findadoctor.

1. American Academy of Periodontology, "New Reports Confirm Perio-Systemic Connection and Outline Clinical Recommendations," perio.org, 2019.

2. Ibid., "Diabetes and Periodontal Disease," 2019.

3. Ibid., "Expectant Mothers' Periodontal Health Vital to Health of Her Baby," 2019.