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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Healthy Habits</th>
<th>Risk Factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Following these habits can improve your oral health and reduce your risk of periodontal disease, tooth decay, and oral cancer:</td>
<td>Being aware of these risk factors can help you prevent or manage an oral health problem:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Brush your teeth twice per day and floss daily.</td>
<td>• Bleeding gums</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Visit the dentist regularly.</td>
<td>• Diabetes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Eat a well-balanced diet.</td>
<td>• Frequent fillings or crowns</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Avoid smoking and having more than two alcoholic drinks per day.</td>
<td>• Taking medications that reduce saliva</td>
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</table>

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.