

Today's Vocabulary

- Diabetes: a disease in which there is usually too much sugar in the blood
- Susceptible: easily affected
- Complication: a disease or disorder arising as a result of another disease
- Exacerbate: increase the severity; aggravate
- Ischemia: A decrease in the blood supply to a bodily organ, tissue, or part caused by constriction or obstruction of the blood vessels

DIABETES

Diabetic patients are more likely to develop periodontal disease, which in turn can increase blood sugar and diabetic complications.

People with diabetes are more likely to have periodontal disease than people without diabetes, probably because people with diabetes are more susceptible to contracting infections. In fact, periodontal disease is often considered a complication of diabetes. Those people who don't have their diabetes under control are especially at risk.

Research has suggested that the relationship between diabetes and periodontal disease goes both ways - periodontal disease may make it more difficult for people who have diabetes to control their blood sugar.

Severe periodontal disease can increase blood sugar, contributing to increased periods of time when the body functions with a high blood sugar. This puts people with diabetes at increased risk for diabetic complications.

HEART DISEASE

Several studies have shown that periodontal disease is associated with heart disease. While a cause-and-effect relationship has not yet been proven, research has indicated that periodontal disease increases the risk of heart disease.

Scientists believe that inflammation caused by periodontal disease may be responsible for the association.

Periodontal disease can also exacerbate existing heart conditions. Patients at risk for infective endocarditis may require antibiotics prior to dental procedures. Your periodontist and cardiologist will be able to determine if your heart condition requires use of antibiotics prior to dental procedures.

STROKE

Additional studies have pointed to a relationship between periodontal disease and stroke. In one study that looked at the causal relationship of oral infection as a risk factor for stroke, people diagnosed with acute cerebrovascular ischemia were found more likely to have an oral infection when compared to those in the control group.

Express your ideas:

1. Why is a diabetic person more at risk for periodontal disease?
2. Can periodontal disease worsen diabetes? How?
3. What risks can a diabetic person with periodontal disease face?
4. Do you think a periodontal disease can increase the risk of heart disease? Why?
5. As a dentist, what is your advice to patients who have systemic diseases?