

The Role of Oral Health in Chronic Disease Management

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CAPSULE

Oral health is closely linked to cardiometabolic disease, such as diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease. Periodontal disease, which affects 40% of adults in the United States, is more than just a dental concern; it is a low-grade chronic inflammatory condition that can worsen or be worsened by systemic illnesses.¹

This “two-hit model” suggests a synergistic relationship in which disease in one area amplifies risk in another.^{2,3} For example, diabetes can impair healing and immune response, increasing the risk of periodontal disease. The resulting inflammation from periodontal disease may worsen blood glucose control or cardiovascular function. In addition, medications used to treat cardiovascular, neurologic, or psychiatric conditions often lead to dry mouth, increasing the risk of decay and infection.

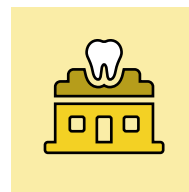
Strategies to Support Oral Health

Improving oral health is an important component of managing chronic disease. Collaboration between medical and dental providers is critical to integrating oral health into preventive care strategies. Providers should assess risks to oral health, including diet, medication side effects, and signs of systemic illness in the mouth.

At the patient level, key prevention strategies include brushing twice daily, flossing or using interdental brushes, and maintaining regular dental visits. Tongue scrapers and dry mouth interventions can further support oral hygiene.⁴ Lifestyle factors, such as smoking, poor nutrition, and intake of sugar-sweetened beverages, candy, or starchy foods, also strongly impact oral and systemic health.

For more information, access Cardi-OH’s expanded resource on [oral health](#).

Figure 1. Tips for Maintaining Good Oral Health



Schedule regular dental visits



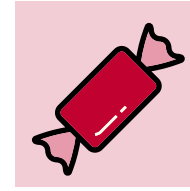
Brush twice daily



Floss daily



Don't smoke



Decrease sugar intake

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