

## The Connection Between Oral & Overall Health

We often take our oral health for granted, and many people don't even think about it until they are in pain. Somehow, it's become normal to think about our mouths and our teeth as completely separate from the rest of our body. But oral health is very closely related to overall health. Preventive dental visits are an important way to maintain not just a healthy mouth but a healthy body as well.

Regular dentist visits can detect signs of nutritional deficiencies, general infection, or even more serious systemic diseases. More than 120 diseases can cause specific signs and symptoms in and around the mouth and jaw, like swollen or bleeding gums, ulcers, dry mouth, bad breath, and metallic taste. But a dentist doing regular check-ups can spot symptoms that could indicate serious health problems elsewhere in the body. Some of these health concerns include:

### ▶ HEART DISEASE

People with gum disease have nearly double the risk for heart disease as those with healthy gums, according to the American Academy of Periodontology.

### ▶ DIABETES

Studies show that people with diabetes are more susceptible to the development of gum disease and other oral health problems.

### ▶ PREGNANCY

During pregnancy, hormonal changes may increase the risk of gingivitis (inflammation of the gums).

### ▶ ORAL CANCER

Your dentist can screen for oral cancer and other cancers of the head and neck when you go in for a regular check-up. Survival rates greatly increase the earlier the cancer is discovered and treated.

**Make sure you're taking care of your WHOLE body . . .  
SEE YOUR DENTIST TODAY!**