



Good oral health can 'prevent' heart disease

People with periodontal diseases are almost twice as likely to have a heart attack

of heart disease is increasing across Oman. It is no secret that heart diseases affect thousands of people in trying to live by paying attention to medicines, and kinds of machines come and a ship.



DR RICHA RAJ

Not many people know that there is a cheap and powerful weapon against heart attacks, strokes and other heart conditions. It is simple, it is in your mouth and is sitting on your bathroom counter. It is none other than the humble toothbrush.

According to the American Heart Association, people with periodontal diseases are almost twice as likely to have a heart disease (also called coronary artery disease). One study found that the presence of common problems in the mouth, including

predicting heart disease as well as cholesterol levels.

A study authored by M Desvarieux, published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*, tested 657 people without any known heart disease. The study found that people who had higher blood

levels of certain disease-causing bacteria in the mouth were more likely to have deposits of fat and other substances (atherosclerosis) in the carotid artery in the neck. Clogging and narrowing of these carotid arteries can lead to stroke.

There are various factors that link oral health and heart disease. These are:

1 Bacteria stick to the fatty plaques in the bloodstream, directly contributing to blockages. Also, certain forms of mouth bacteria can cause vegetative matter to grow in the valves of your heart,

2 Some studies point to the body's own defence mechanisms against bacteria. One of the body's natural responses to infection is inflammation (swelling). It is possible that as these oral bacteria travel through your body, they trigger a similar response, causing the blood cells to swell. This swelling could then narrow an artery and

poor cardiovascular health. Either due to missing teeth, or poorly fitting dentures, people may not eat a diet as high in fibre. Softer foods often mean more fatty foods, and a significantly unbalanced diet, which increases the risk of heart diseases. It is important to get properly fitting replacement teeth or crowns so that you can consume recommended

TOOTH & HEART

Not many people know that there is a cheap and powerful weapon against heart attacks, strokes and other heart conditions. It is none other than the humble toothbrush

increase the risk of clots. Blood clots can obstruct normal blood flow, restricting the amount of nutrients and oxygen required for the heart to function properly. This may lead to heart attacks.

3 Another study has found that

amounts of dietary fibre.

You won't ever feel your arteries hardening or your cholesterol rising. But you might notice bleeding or painful gums.

Periodontal disease

Gum (periodontal) diseases are chronic bacterial infections that

Steps to prevent and treat gum diseases

- ▶ Learn better brushing and flossing habits
- ▶ Brush twice daily
- ▶ Floss regularly and get professional cleanings done in a year
- ▶ Once you have a periodontal disease, it may require a visit to a dentist for a careful cleaning of the roots of the teeth, called root planning, or even surgery
- ▶ If you have gum disease, you should check with your dentist about antiseptic mouthwash. It can help remove bacteria from the mouth prior to flossing. It not only ward off the bacteria in the mouth but also lead to healthy gums and a bright smile.

When a periodontal evaluation becomes necessary

- ▶ If you are at a high risk for periodontal diseases. Look at <http://www.perio.org/01.html#> for a self assessment
- ▶ Have heart disease, diabetes, respiratory disease or are pregnant or are planning on becoming pregnant
- ▶ Have a family member with periodontal diseases. Research suggests that the bacteria that cause periodontal disease can travel through saliva. This means common contact of saliva puts children and couples at risk of contracting the periodontal disease of another family member
- ▶ Have a sore or irritation in the mouth that does not go away within two weeks

Do not ignore your dentist, especially bleeding gums, causing bad breath and teeth, gum diseases may increase your risk of heart diseases. So consult your surgeon today for a check

structures of the teeth, bleeding and swelling of the tissues which if left untreated can lead to serious health problems. So get it checked as soon as possible. If you have a periodontal disease, do not ignore it.

Dr Richa Raj is a practicing dentist at Pearly White Dental, Khuwair. For details, call 9952 2222.