



The Mouth-Body Connection

What goes on in your mouth affects what happens all over your body. Evidence is continually being shown to support the belief that your mouth is a window into many health issues throughout your body.

It has been proven that more than 75% of American adults suffer from various forms of periodontal (gum) disease and many don't know it.¹ This is alarming because periodontal bacteria can enter the bloodstream and travel to major organs and begin new infections.

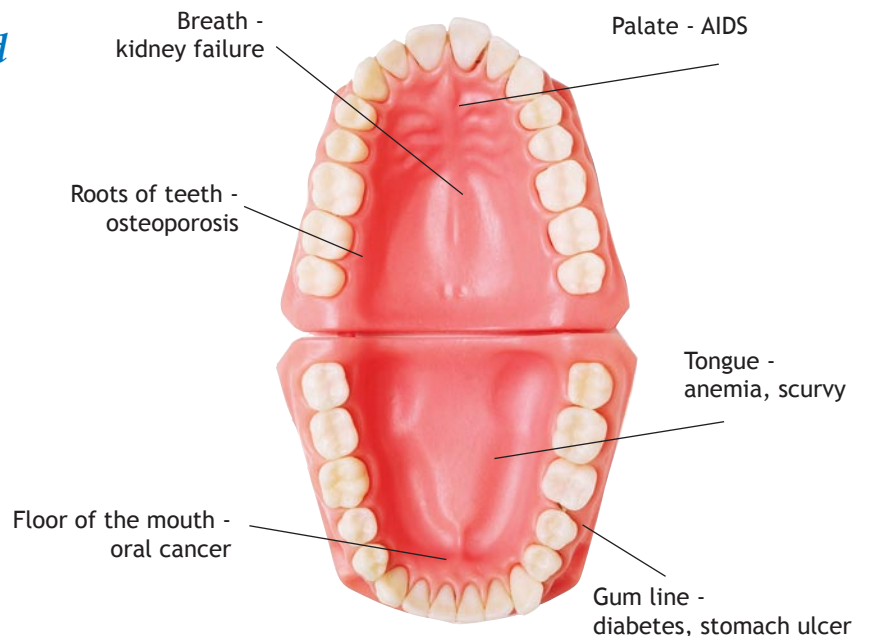
Some of the dangers include:

- **Heart disease**, the nation's leading cause of death. Studies have shown links between cardiovascular disease and key bacteria in periodontal disease.¹
- A 4.3 times greater risk of **stroke** than those with mild or no periodontal disease.²
- **Diabetes**, approximately 95% of Americans with **diabetes** also have periodontal disease.¹
- A sevenfold increase in the risk of pregnant woman delivering **preterm, low birth weight babies**.³

Research shows a significant percentage of people will not obtain medical care during the year.⁴ However, many will visit a dentist office.

What if by visiting the dentist employees are made aware of potential health risks? How might catching these potential health problems early affect absenteeism, employee overall health, and employee satisfaction with their benefit package?

"A dental plan designed to help prevent serious health conditions is a wise investment, particularly for small businesses that can be severely affected by absenteeism," says Dr. Jim Gimarelli, D.M.D.



It is important to partner with a dental insurance carrier that enables preventive dental care and recognizes the medical-dental connection. Assurant Employee benefits has made an effort to design plans that highlight preventive dental care, which has been shown to favorably impact the early detection and incidence of periodontal disease.

Our product enhancements have set the standard in the industry to support the medical-dental connection. Assurant Employee Benefits recognizes the importance of improving the overall health of its members.

¹American Dental Hygienist Association – Dealing with Gum Disease – A Life Threatening Health Risk, 2001

² Gum disease and stroke link, www.medicalnewstoday.com, 2007

³ National Institute of Dental Craniofacial Research – The Oral-Systemic Health Connection

⁴ Clinical Pioneering Rapid HIV Testing in Dental Services, www.kcfree.org, 2007

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