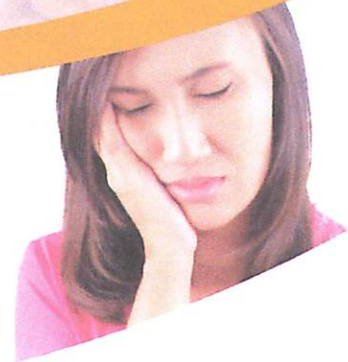
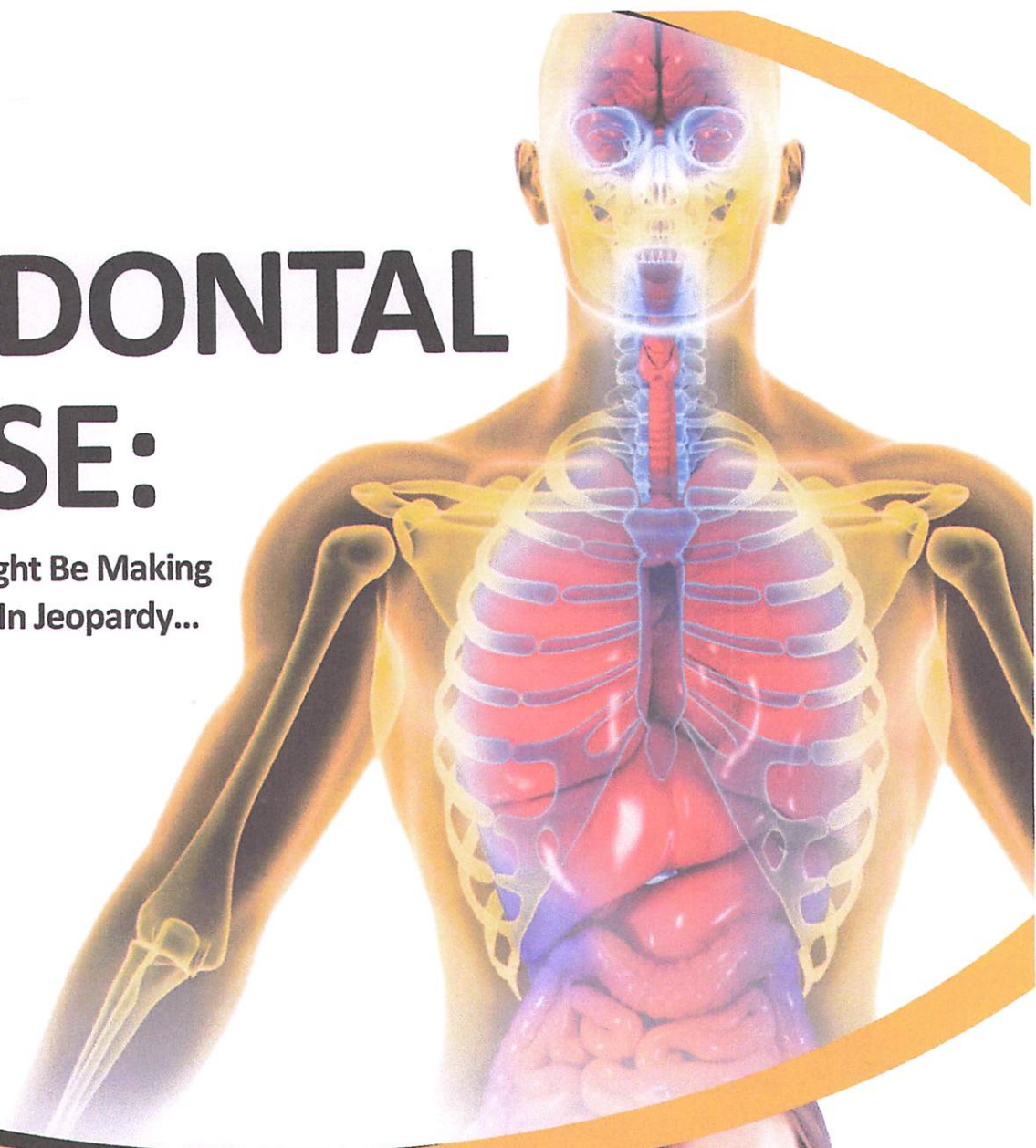


The Patient's Guide To

PERIODONTAL DISEASE:

The Five Mistakes You Might Be Making
That Can Put Your Health In Jeopardy...



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IF YOU HAVE:

- **Bleeding gums**
- **ANY health conditions**
- **History of dental problems**
- **Bad breath**
- **Loose teeth**
- **Not been to a dentist in a while...**

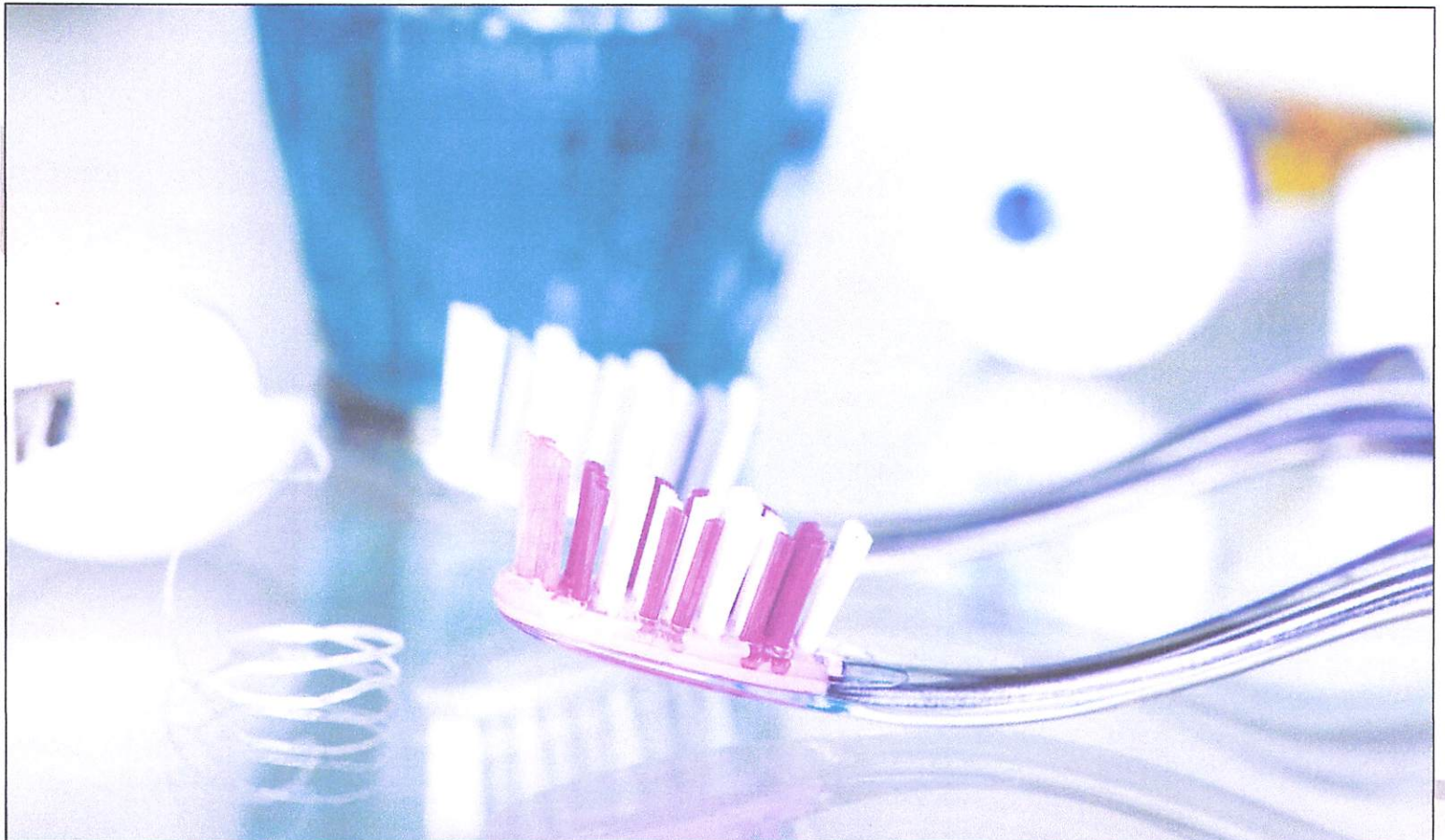
This may be the most important information you read.

The above list are all signs of periodontal disease.

Following are 5 mistakes that people make by assuming, for a variety of reasons, that these signs are “no big deal”. Emerging research is now showing a risk to your health and even your life span.

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MISTAKE #1: MISSING TEETH

In the 'good old days' of dentistry, removal of teeth was most common. You would almost always hear a patient say 'just pull it doc' instead of trying to save a tooth. In recent decades there has been an obvious shift toward prevention for many reasons, mostly advances in techniques and technology, as well as desired quality of life; however a new study which followed mortality of young seniors followed over 5 years, **found a significant predictor of death was the number of teeth present.**¹

Even when allowing for other risk factors for mortality (gender, BMI, serum albumin level, current smoking status, education, number of family members living together, history of chronic disease), the risk of all-cause mortality was significantly associated with the number of remaining teeth ($P = 0.047$) with a hazard ratio of 0.96, indicating that **there was a 4% increase in the 5-year survival rate per additional tooth retained at the age of 70.**

Half of the patients attending a Michigan dental practice are over age 50. But by 65, the dental attendance rate falls quickly as insurance disappears and fixed incomes limit affordability.

This study presents an opportunity to get your dental health to an optimal range as early in life as you can. If we all knew how important teeth are to longevity, we just might convince ourselves to call the dentist.

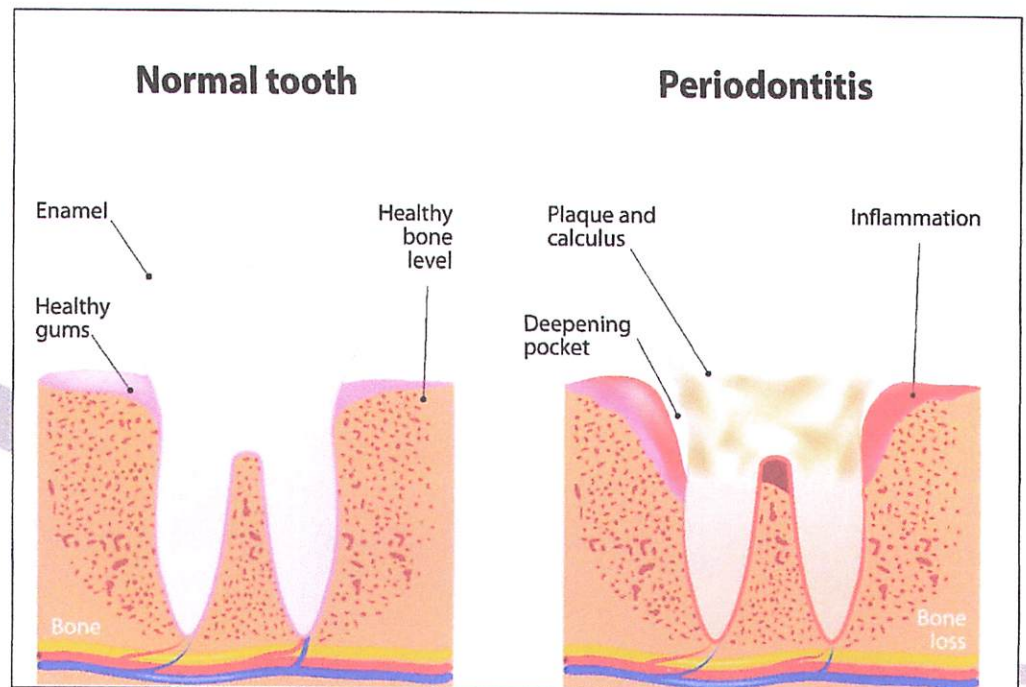
MISTAKE #2: IGNORING BLEEDING GUMS

Bleeding gums is usually the first sign of **periodontal disease**. Many of us have been conditioned to think that a little 'pink in the sink' is in some way normal, but if your gums bleed when you brush, you should definitely not ignore it.

Periodontal disease is often shortened to 'gum disease' outside of the dental profession but it is inaccurate because it implies it is a disease of the soft tissue only, and that is not true. Periodontal disease is actually an **infection** that results in the progressive destruction of the supporting structure of the teeth including the gums and the bone that holds your teeth in place. Very often there is no correlation between what you feel or see looking at your gum tissue to the amount of bone destruction taking place. This is particularly true

for smokers – smoking usually masks the bleeding and is a major risk factor in periodontal disease severity. Even if your gums look somewhat normal to you, the problem is what lies beneath that you cannot see. The bone destruction that follows long term inflammation of the gums (why they bleed) starts and progresses **usually with no pain** – until it is too late. **In these cases the pain only starts when the tooth becomes loose or abscesses and the infection is very painful.**

I have heard people say, 'well when that happens I'll just pull them all out'. You certainly can do that, but losing teeth to periodontal disease is the worst scenario (besides all the health concerns about having periodontal disease in the first place) because of the amount of bone that is destroyed permanently – so even making dentures to replace teeth is very difficult.



Dentures made on healthy bone support already yield a poor quality of life compared to natural teeth, and are only about a maximum of 20% as effective as natural teeth. Dentures made on non-existent bone support are really just for smiling. The quality of life is not good. So, while it's easy to say 'just pull them out', it's another thing entirely to live with the result, and no matter how much I have told people they have no idea how disappointed they will be, they are still never really prepared for it. It's something to be avoided or delayed as long as possible, unless you are moving to a permanent solution like dental implants.



Then there are all the total body health issues that come with periodontal disease. You'll want to pay close attention here:

Emerging research now shows that people with gum disease are **twice as likely to suffer a heart attack and 3x more likely to die from a stroke**. Men with gum disease are about 50% more likely to develop kidney disease and pancreatic cancer. In fact, gum disease affects

Perhaps the most disturbing link with periodontal disease is the effect on the brain – a link has been found to Alzheimer's disease as well

90% of other illnesses because it is an inflammatory disease.

If you want to keep your teeth, and maintain your overall health, prevention is the only defense.

If you are diabetic, having gum disease makes it **6 TIMES** more difficult to control blood glucose! On the same note, a pilot study of 50 adult dental patients with periodontal disease but no formal diagnosis of diabetes found that about 1 in 3 were pre-diabetic.

MISTAKE #3: UNTREATED TOOTH DECAY

We don't typically think of problems in the mouth affecting other parts of the body. But as we discussed above, Periodontal disease, an infection of the mouth, can have implications for the rest of the body. The story doesn't end there. Other conditions left untreated can have a severely negative impact on your overall health – conditions like an abscessed tooth. Even if you are not suffering from this condition currently, you need to be aware of the potential consequences so that you can keep yourself safe and healthy if the problem ever does appear.

What is an abscessed tooth?

An abscessed tooth is an oral infection that appears at the base or root of the tooth. The infection is usually the result of severe tooth decay and will manifest itself as severe pain with or without swelling. Usually you cannot bite on or even touch the tooth without pain.

These are some of the most common symptoms:

- Fever
- Pain
- Bitter taste
- Bad breath
- Red, swollen gums
- Open, draining sores on the gums
- Swollen cheek

How Does an Abscessed Tooth Affect Your Overall Health?

Any infection in the body is cause for alarm. An abscessed tooth represents a severe infection that is uniquely located to spread its damage elsewhere. These are some of the potential consequences:

- Infected gums can damage the jaw bone and **cause permanent bone loss**.
- The infection can spread to the brain through blood vessels and lead to a brain abscess. In extreme cases, this can cause the patient to go into a coma.
- The infection can spread upwards and lead to a **sinus infection**.
- Bacteria from the infection can spread to the heart and lead to a condition called bacterial endocarditis.
- Abscessed teeth can cause an infection in the face and jaw called **Ludwig's**

angina which can severely restrict the airways and result in death if not treated rapidly.

- Bacteria from the infection can cause infection of other body organs such as the liver.

How to Prevent and Treat an Abscessed Tooth Prevention is always the best medicine. You can generally avoid abscessed teeth entirely if you

MISTAKE #4: ASSUMING NO PAIN = NO PROBLEM

The human body is so amazing. It has evolved over thousands and thousands of years into a highly

When I talk about this with my patients, I explain that teeth in their natural, healthy, condition are painless. It's important that we keep them like this.

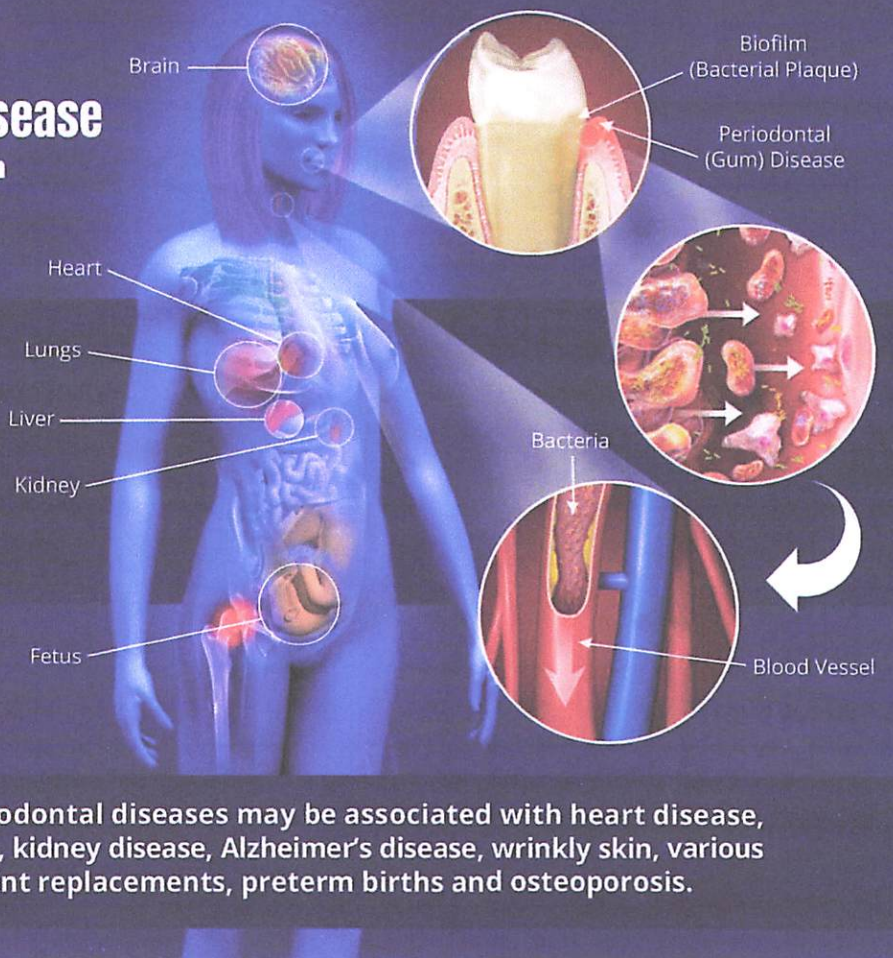
It's true that people won't feel pain from a blocked blood vessel in their heart until the heart attack, and like this, most dental problems are painless until it's too late and has become a bigger problem.

The simplest and least expensive dentistry is preventative.

What could be a simple preventative maintenance visit today, may be treatment for periodontal disease in a matter of months. A small cavity that could be repaired with a filling today may become an abscess in a matter of weeks. So many people say things like "I broke a tooth/lost a filling/my gums are bleeding when I brush

Periodontal Disease Can Affect Your Heart & Body

Emerging evidence shows a relationship between periodontal disease, cardiovascular disease and other chronic diseases - the common link is **inflammation**.



The presence of periodontal diseases may be associated with heart disease, respiratory infections, kidney disease, Alzheimer's disease, wrinkly skin, various cancers, failure of joint replacements, preterm births and osteoporosis.

brush and floss daily, and visit a dentist regularly. As with anything, the longer the condition is left untreated, the more difficult, protracted, and painful the treatment becomes.

sophisticated and interconnected circuitry of sensors that transmit sensations that we interpret as pain for example. In some cases the pain is immediately felt – like stubbing your toe, and in some cases, we do not feel pain until it is too late. Tooth pain falls into the second category.

but it doesn't hurt so it's ok for now". The truth is, you're sitting on a ticking bomb. Waiting for it to hurt is of no benefit in anything related to the human body that I can think of.

MISTAKE #5: NOT FLOSSING

Regular flossing, long considered an essential part of daily dental cleansing, has been found to have a **positive effect on your life expectancy, increasing it by up to 6 years.** Wait a minute? What? Exactly.

Yes the thing your dental hygienist constantly nags you about is actually very beneficial to your overall health.

If you have the time, have a read through the book "RealAge" by Michael F. Roizen, MD, and the general concept is to calculate how old a person is actually (compared to averages and actuarial tables) based to a great degree upon choices he/she makes about lifestyle, eating, exercise, etc.

Here is a direct quote from the section on dental health: "These studies show that the presence of periodontal diseases, diseases most common in people with tooth loss, actually affects longevity. The best of these studies done at Emory University with the Centers for Disease Control, **indicated that people with gingivitis and periodontitis have a mortality rate that is 23 percent to 46 percent higher than those who don't...** why? They are linked to increased

rates of cardiovascular disease and stroke, as well as to an increase in mortality from other causes, such as infections."

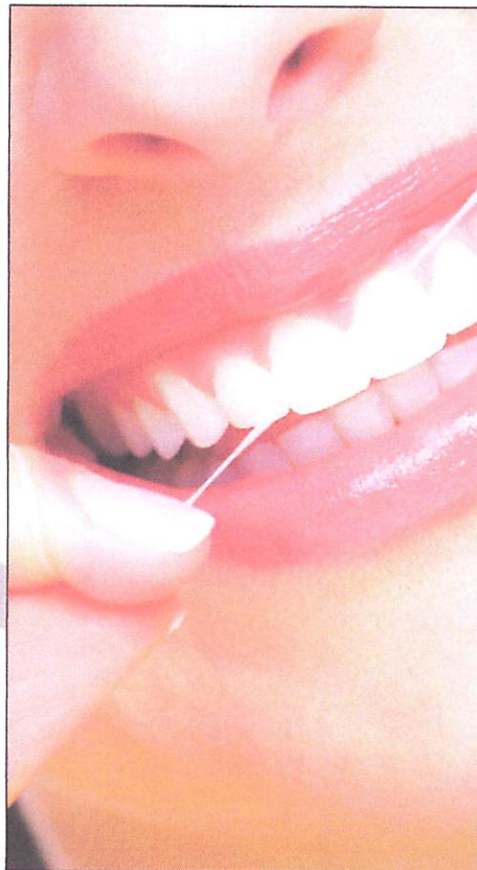
And...

"Flossing your teeth daily can make your arteries younger. The probable reason: Flossing helps keep your immune system young... the same bacteria that cause periodontal disease also trigger an immune response, inflammation that causes the arteries to swell. The swelling of the arterial walls results in a constriction of blood flow that can lead to a higher incidence of cardiovascular disease.

Other studies have shown that

periodontal disease leads to a higher white blood cell count, which is an indicator that the immune system is under increased stress.... Poor oral hygiene and particularly increased tooth loss are important indicators of your risk. The fewer teeth you have, the greater your risk of gum infections."

Even if you don't believe in the entire premise of the book, you can look up the studies and come to your own conclusions, but the evidence is clearly supporting the fact that flossing decreases inflammation, and inflammation is a huge causative factor in the majority of health issues. See, your hygienist really does care about you!



Citations

1 Number of teeth – a predictor of mortality in 70-year-old subjects
Tor Österberg, Gunnar E Carlsson, Valter Sundh and Dan Mellström
Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology
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2 Inflammation as a potential mediator for the association between periodontal disease and Alzheimer's disease
Amber Watts, Eileen M Crimmins, Margaret Gatz
Neuropsychiatr Dis Treat. 2008 October; 4(5): 865–876.

Ask About A Complimentary Consultation!

Call **248-669-5220** to book your appointment.



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Wed: 7:00am – 1:00pm
Thu: 7:00am – 5:00pm