

# How your dental health impacts your whole body.

Regular dental care, like brushing and flossing, does more than just protect your teeth. Your mouth is closely connected to your overall health – and when dental health is neglected, it can contribute to inflammation, infection and complications tied to broader health conditions.

Simply put – your dental health is an important part of your overall wellness.

## Diabetes and dental health are closely connected.

High blood sugar can increase the risk of gum disease and infections.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, untreated gum inflammation may make blood sugar harder to manage.

### Reasons to see your dentist ...

- **Bleeding or swollen gums.** Ongoing inflammation in the mouth may signal a larger health issue.
- **Persistent dry mouth.** Reduced saliva – often linked to medications – increases the risk of cavities and infection.
- **You're due for a checkup.** Routine exams can uncover early warning signs of other health concerns.

## Your dentist may spot early warning signs.

More than 100 health conditions can show symptoms in the mouth. For example, bone loss in the jaw may signal osteoporosis, and enamel erosion can point to acid reflux.<sup>2</sup>

## Gum disease affects more than your smile.

Left untreated, gum disease can cause issues beyond the mouth. Links have been identified between gum disease and other inflammatory conditions throughout the body like cardiovascular diseases.

## Prevention supports lifelong wellness.

Consistent at-home dental care and keeping up with checkups help reduce the risk of infections, tooth decay and malnutrition.<sup>3</sup> Routine visits also include screenings for oral cancer, when early detection can make a meaningful difference.

1. "Diabetes and Oral Health," cdc.gov, last reviewed May 15, 2024, accessed February 11, 2026; 2. "How your dentist could save your life," written by Maureen Salamon, reviewed by Toni Golen, MD, Harvard Health Publishing, health.harvard.edu, updated February 1, 2025, accessed February 11, 2026; 3. "Oral Health Among Elderly, Impact on Life Quality, Access of Elderly Patients to Oral Health Services and Methods to Improve Oral Health: A Narrative Review," National Library of Medicine (PMC), February 28, 2022

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