



The link between oral health and Alzheimer's disease

Alzheimer's disease is a brain disorder that gets worse over time. It affects memory, thinking and daily activities. Millions of people live with this condition. Recent studies show there may be a connection between taking care of your teeth and lowering your risk of Alzheimer's.

HOW ORAL HEALTH IS LINKED TO ALZHEIMER'S

Research suggests that poor oral health, especially gum disease, might increase the chance of getting Alzheimer's. Gum disease occurs when the gums and tissues around your teeth become infected.

A study found that people with gum disease were 1.5 times more likely to develop Alzheimer's compared to those with healthy gums.¹

THE ROLE OF INFLAMMATION

Inflammation, or swelling in the body, may be the key link between gum disease and Alzheimer's. Gum disease causes chronic inflammation, which can release proteins into the bloodstream. These proteins may speed up the development of Alzheimer's.²

Researchers also found that higher levels of inflammation in the body could increase the risk of memory problems.³

BACTERIA AND BRAIN HEALTH

Certain bacteria in the mouth, like *Porphyromonas gingivalis*, are involved in gum disease. This bacteria has been found in the brains of Alzheimer's patients. It's possible the bacteria moves from the mouth to the brain, causing inflammation and damage over time.⁴

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The link between oral health and Alzheimer's disease (continued)



HOW TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN WITH GOOD ORAL CARE

Taking care of your teeth may help protect your brain. Here are some tips:

- **Visit the dentist regularly:** Getting dental check-ups at least twice a year may help catch problems like gum disease early.
- **Brush and floss daily:** Clean your teeth twice a day and floss regularly to help keep your gums healthy.
- **Eat healthy foods:** Include fruits, vegetables, and whole grains in meals to support your oral and brain health.
- **Don't smoke:** Smoking harms your gums and raises the risk of Alzheimer's, so quitting is important.

WHY IT MATTERS

More research is needed, but the connection between oral health and Alzheimer's shows how important it is to care for your teeth and gums. Good dental care not only keeps your smile bright but may also help protect your brain as you age.

Talk to your dentist about any concerns you have and make oral health a priority for your overall well-being.

¹Tzeng, R. C. et al. (2016). "Periodontal Disease as a Risk Factor for Alzheimer's Disease: A Review." *Alzheimer's & Dementia*. ²Bach, K. et al. (2021). "Periodontal Disease and Cognitive Decline: The Role of Inflammation." *Journal of Periodontology*. ³Kumar, S. et al. (2019). "Inflammation and Cognitive Impairment: The Role of Periodontal Disease." *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*. ⁴Dominy, S. S. et al. (2019). "Porphyromonas gingivalis in Alzheimer's Disease: A Potential Link." *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*.