

Successful weight control can also help your teeth and gums.

A Harvard School of Public Health study recently showed that obesity leads to a significantly greater risk of gum (periodontal) disease.

Your diet could be harming your oral health more than you know.

"Obesity" means an individual has so much body fat that his or her health is in danger¹ as measured by BMI or "Body Mass Index."² The causes of obesity are complex, and include genetic, biological, behavioral and cultural factors. Although certain medical disorders can cause obesity, less than 1% of all obesity is caused by physical problems.³

Basically, obesity occurs when a person eats more calories than the body burns up.³ More than half of all U.S. women over age 20, and more than two-thirds of all U.S. men over age 20 are clinically obese.¹ It is commonly reported that obesity can lead to type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, arthritis, sleep apnea and even stroke. However, did you know it also increases your risk for gum disease?

Diet is a common risk factor for oral disease and obesity.⁴

A diet high in fat and calories, including large quantities of processed foods or sugar, combined with a lack of physical activity leads to obesity. Those same foods can cause oral health problems including gum disease, premature tooth loss, and bad breath.

In addition, poor diets may result in a lack of essential nutrients, potentially making it more difficult for your body to fight off an infection in your mouth.⁵ Among obese Americans aged 18-34, gum disease was 76% more common than when compared with normal weight individuals in that age group.⁶

Tips for making changes that improve your health.⁵

- Control portions and consume fewer calories
- Reduce your sugar intake
- Drink water rather than soft drinks
- Avoid acidic foods such as candies, cookies, cakes, pastries and french fries
- Avoid fatty foods such as junk food and fast foods
- Do not use food as a reward
- Increase your physical activity
- Take care of your teeth and gums at home
- Visit your dentist regularly



Obesity is also a problem for children³

- Between 16% and 33% of children and adolescents are obese, meaning they weigh at least 10% more than what is recommended for their height and body weight.
- Childhood obesity can begin as early as age 5-6.
- A child who is obese and aged 10-13 has an 80% chance of becoming an obese adult.
- When one parent is obese, there is a 50% chance that the children will also be obese. When both parents are obese, that risk increases to 80%.

A healthy diet supports a healthy body - and a healthy mouth!

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it's time to feel better



¹ www.ama-assn.org ²Centers for Disease Control, www.cdc.gov. ³American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, www.aacap.org
⁴www.dentalabstracts.com (2008) ⁵American Dental Association, www.ada.org ⁶American Academy of Periodontology, www.perio.org
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