

- Control weight by engaging in daily physical activity and reducing calorie intake



**Cutting down sugar decreases the risk of heart diseases.**

### **What can your dental healthcare provider do to manage your gum disease if you have a heart disease?**

Your dentist provides the standard treatment to control plaque and gum inflammation. This includes:

- Oral hygiene instruction
- Recommendation of plaque controlling toothpaste and mouthrinse
- Advise on cleaning between adjoining teeth
- Removal of calculus/tartar

**If you have one or more risk factors for heart disease, your dentist may refer you to a doctor for a medical check-up.**

**Your dentist and doctor may discuss with each other how to control the risk factors common for your gum disease and heart disease.**

### **Your checklist**

- ✓ Quit smoking
- ✓ Reduce salt, sugar and total calorie intake
- ✓ Cut down food high in cholesterol, saturated fat and trans-fatty acids
- ✓ Eat more food with low saturated fat and high fibre
- ✓ Control your weight
- ✓ Engage in daily physical activity
- ✓ Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste using a soft toothbrush
- ✓ Floss your teeth every day to clean difficult-to-reach areas
- ✓ Look for early signs of gum disease
- ✓ Visit your dentist at least once a year and have your gums checked
- ✓ Follow your dentist's instructions to control your gum disease
- ✓ Take prescribed medications as advised by your doctor

**Quitting smoking  
Phone Quitline 137 848 (13 QUIT)**

### **Further information**

Dental Practice Education Research Unit  
ARCPOH, School of Dentistry,  
The University of Adelaide, SA 5005  
Phone (08) 8313 4045 Fax (08) 8313 4858  
Website [www.arcpoh.adelaide.edu.au/dperu](http://www.arcpoh.adelaide.edu.au/dperu)

## **Heart Diseases and Your Gums**

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## Heart Diseases and Your Gums

Heart diseases are the main cause of death in Australia contributing to over 16% of deaths in 2007. Infections in the mouth are historically connected to general ill-health. The association between gum (periodontal) disease and heart diseases has been a hot topic among researchers in the recent past.

### What is gum disease?

- Gum disease affects gums, bone and other supporting tissues of teeth
- Dental plaque, which is a sticky colourless film of bacteria build-up on the teeth, is the major cause of gum disease
- Long-standing gum disease can result in tooth loss



Figure 1. Healthy gums

### Early signs of gum disease:

- Bleeding gums
- Red, swollen or tender gums
- Persistent bad breath



Figure 2. Gum disease

### Risk factors

Heart diseases and gum disease share many risk factors.

- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Age
- Sex
- Ethnicity
- Socioeconomic status
- Stress
- Obesity

**Smoking, diabetes, stress and obesity can be modified through lifestyle changes to prevent and control heart diseases as well as gum disease.**

### What can you do to prevent both gum and heart diseases?

- Quit smoking



- Cut down salt and sugar intake



- Cut down total calorie intake
- Reduce eating foods high in cholesterol, saturated fat and trans-fatty acids



- Eat more foods containing low saturated fat and high fibre

Heart Diseases

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