

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Oral Health: A
Window to your
Overall Health

Cooking Recipe



THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ORAL HEALTH AND OVERALL WELL-BEING

Like other areas of the body, your mouth has loads of (mostly harmless) bacteria. But your mouth is also the entry point to your digestive and respiratory tracts, and some of these bacteria can cause disease.

Normally the body's natural defenses and good oral health care, such as daily brushing and flossing, keep bacteria under control. However, without proper oral hygiene, bacteria can reach levels that might lead to oral infections, such as tooth decay and gum disease.

Also, certain medications — such as decongestants, antihistamines, painkillers, diuretics and antidepressants — can reduce saliva flow. Saliva washes away food and neutralizes acids produced by bacteria in the mouth, helping to protect you from microbes that multiply and lead to disease.

Studies suggest that oral bacteria and the inflammation associated with a severe form of gum disease (periodontitis) might play a role in some diseases. And certain diseases, such as diabetes and HIV/AIDS, can lower the body's resistance to infection, making oral health problems more severe.

On page 2, continue to read more about health conditions linked to oral health, and ways to maintain a healthy mouth and strong teeth.



CONDITIONS THAT CAN BE LINKED TO ORAL HEALTH

Your oral health might contribute to various diseases and conditions, including:

- **Endocarditis.** This infection of the inner lining of your heart chambers or valves (endocardium) typically occurs when bacteria or other germs from another part of your body, such as your mouth, spread through your bloodstream and attach to certain areas in your heart.
- **Cardiovascular disease.** Although the connection is not fully understood, some research suggests that heart disease, clogged arteries and stroke might be linked to the inflammation and infections that oral bacteria can cause.
- **Pregnancy and birth complications.** Periodontitis has been linked to premature birth and low birth weight.
- **Pneumonia.** Certain bacteria in your mouth can be pulled into your lungs, causing pneumonia and other respiratory diseases.

Oral health refers to the health of the teeth, gums, and the entire oral-facial system that allows us to smile, speak, and chew. Some of the most common diseases that impact our oral health include cavities (tooth decay), gum (periodontal) disease, and oral cancer.

More than 40% of adults report having felt pain in their mouth within the last year, and more than 80% of people will have had at least one cavity by age 34. The nation spends more than \$124 billion on costs related to dental care each year. On average, over 34 million school hours and more than \$45 billion in productivity are lost each year as a result of dental emergencies requiring unplanned care.

Oral conditions are frequently considered separate from other chronic conditions, but these are actually inter-related. Poor oral health is associated with other chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Oral disease also is associated with risk behaviors such as using tobacco and consuming sugary foods and beverages.



Remember to schedule a preventive care visit with your dentist every 6 months. Taking care of your oral health is an investment in your overall health.

ORAL HEALTH TIPS

Here are some things you can do to maintain a healthy mouth and strong teeth.

- Drink fluoridated water and brush with fluoride toothpaste.
- Practice good oral hygiene. Brush teeth thoroughly twice a day and floss daily between the teeth to remove dental plaque.
- Visit your dentist for a preventive care visit every 6 months, even if you have no natural teeth or have dentures.
- Do not use any tobacco products. If you smoke, quit.
- Limit alcoholic drinks.
- If you have diabetes, work to maintain control of the disease. This will decrease risk for other complications, including gum disease. Treating gum disease may help lower your blood sugar level.
- If your medication causes dry mouth, ask your doctor for a different medication that may not cause this condition. If dry mouth cannot be avoided, drink plenty of water, chew sugarless gum, and avoid tobacco products and alcohol.
- See your doctor or a dentist if you have sudden changes in taste and smell.
- When acting as a caregiver, help older individuals brush and floss their teeth if they are not able to perform these activities independently.



RECIPE OF THE MONTH

APPLE PIE OVERNIGHT OATS

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES

Ingredients:

Fall is near! Schools are back in session, and the weather is starting to feel crisp. This is the perfect time for a new morning breakfast. Our Apple Pie Overnight Oats is a quick breakfast you can prepare the night before, and is loaded with healthy fiber to start your busy morning.

APPLES

- 3/4 cup crisp, sweet apple, cut into small bite-size pieces (peeling is optional for less texture // we prefer Honeycrisp)
- 3/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 Tbsp maple syrup
- 1 pinch sea salt

OVERNIGHT OATS

- 3/4 cup unsweetened plain almond milk (or sub other dairy-free milk of choice)
- 1 Tbsp chia seeds
- 1/2 – 1 Tbsp maple syrup
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2Tbsp creamy unsalted cashew or almond butter
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup rolled oats (certified gluten-free as needed)

Directions:

1. **APPLES:** To a small saucepan, add chopped apples, cinnamon, maple syrup, and salt and mix to evenly distribute the cinnamon.
2. Turn heat on low and cover. Cook, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes or until the apples are soft and tender. Remove the lid, turn the heat up to medium, and cook for 2-3 more minutes, stirring constantly, to evaporate some of the juices and create a nice syrup around the apples. Once most of the liquid is gone, turn off the heat and set aside.
3. **OATS:** In a small bowl, mix the almond milk, chia seeds, maple syrup, cinnamon, nut butter, and vanilla. Add the oats and stir until well-combined.
4. Get two small mason jars. Place about a quarter of the cooked apple mixture into the bottom of each container, add half the oat mixture to each as your middle layer, then divide and place the rest of the cooked apples on top of the oats. Place in the refrigerator overnight, or for at least 6 hours.
5. Enjoy chilled or at room temperature. Overnight oats will keep in the refrigerator for 2-3 days, though best within the first 12-24 hours. Not freezer friendly.