



Think about it...

- More than 75 percent of those over age 35 will be affected by some form of periodontal disease.¹
- Poor oral health can make diabetes more difficult to control, resulting in infections that lead to higher blood-sugar levels.²
- Those with untreated periodontal disease have up to a two-fold increased risk for heart disease.³
- Advanced gum disease affects four to 12 percent of adults.⁴
- By looking in the mouth, a dentist can detect more than 120 disease symptoms.⁵
- Pregnant women with gum disease may be seven times more likely to deliver premature, low-birth-weight babies.⁶

¹ M.P. McQueen. "Health Plans Expand Dental Benefits," The Wall Street Journal, 2006.

² MayoClinic.com

³ "Periodontal Diseases – what you need to know," The American Academy of Periodontology, 2006.

⁴ www.CDC.gov

⁵ "Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General," 2000.

⁶ Jeffcoat MK, Geurs NC, Reddy MS, Cliver SP, Goldenberg RL, Hauth JC. "Periodontal infection and preterm birth: Results of a prospective study." J Am Dent Assoc. 2001 Jul; 132(7):875-80/Lopez NJ, Smith PC, Gutierrez J. "Higher risk of preterm birth and low birth weight in women with periodontal disease". J Dent Res. 2002 Jan; 81(1):5 8-63/Jeffcoat MK, Hauth JC, Geurs NC, Reddy MS, Cliver SP, Hodgkins PM, Goldenberg RL. "Periodontal disease and preterm birth: Results of a pilot interventional study." J Periodontal. 2003 Aug; 74(8):1214-1218.

Coronary Artery Disease

Researchers have found that people with periodontal disease are almost twice as likely to suffer from coronary artery disease as those without gum disease. There are several current theories of how this happens. When bacteria from the mouth enter the blood vessels, they attach to fatty proteins which may lead to blood clots and plaque build-up. Inflammation caused by periodontal disease could also increase plaque build-up, which may cause arteries to narrow and harden. Gum disease can also exacerbate existing heart conditions.

Diabetes

The relationship between periodontal disease and diabetes goes both ways. Those with diabetes are more susceptible to periodontal disease, and periodontal disease may increase blood-sugar levels and complications for those already living with diabetes. Periodontal disease may also increase the progression of prediabetes and can increase insulin resistance and disrupt glycemic control.

Pregnancy

Pregnant women may develop pregnancy gingivitis with gums that are red, tender and likely to bleed. Untreated periodontal disease can assist the movement of bacteria from the mouth into the blood stream where it can increase the level of labor-inducing fluid.



Oral Health
for
Total Health

You know that dental health can have an influence on the development of conditions such as diabetes, coronary artery disease (CAD) and low-birth-weight, premature babies, and that an undeniable relationship exists between a healthy mouth and overall good health. Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) wants to make sure your patients know it too.

HMSA is committed to our community and the health of its members. That's why we support a three-tiered approach to optimum oral care called Oral Health for Total Health.

The three tiers include:

- Informing our members about the connection between oral and overall health
- Educating our members with CAD or diabetes about the benefits of good oral health
- Engaging in targeted intervention for select members with CAD or diabetes who are not maintaining their oral health and sharing the importance of following up with their provider and making an appointment

Because we offer medical and dental coverage, we're able to analyze claims information and identify members who can benefit from focused attention and additional education.



Our three-tiered approach in action:

- An early 2011 direct-mail campaign promoting the health benefits of regular dental care will target at-risk members with CAD or diabetes.
- The article "Can Healthy Gums Protect Your Whole Body?" appeared in the CAD quarterly newsletter.
- The article "A New Reason to Smile" presented the connection between periodontal disease and diabetes, CAD and pregnancy in HMSA's *Island Scene* magazine.

Why HMSA's Oral Health for Total Health approach works for everyone



Dental plans that don't cover or have knowledge of their members' medical conditions often look only to control allowances paid to dentists. While this offers some value to the plan member, it does little to boost the satisfaction of dental providers. At HMSA, we look for innovative ideas that allow all parties to benefit.

Our Oral Health for Total Health approach provides you with patients who are better informed, patients who want to participate in their care and treatment plans and opportunities to grow your patient base through our educational outreach. If you have questions or would like more information about HMSA's Oral Health for Total Health approach, please call Dental Customer Service (808) 948-6440 or (800) 792-4672.