

Your oral health is connected to your overall health

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Scientists at the 87th General Session of the International Association for Dental Research, convening today in Miami Beach, report new studies on the connection between oral disease and systemic disease. A recurring theme is the relationship between periodontal (gum) disease and infant prematurity, diabetes, or stroke.

Studies reporting on the efficacy of treating [periodontal disease](#) to lower the incidence of infant prematurity worldwide may be conflicting when [pregnant mothers](#) with periodontal disease are treated with scaling and root planing (tooth cleaning above and below the gum line). While treatment of mothers with mild periodontal disease usually does not have an effect on infant prematurity, the greatest effect has been reported by scientists to be observed in mothers with generalized severe periodontal disease. A higher prevalence of premature births is found among African-Americans than among [Caucasians](#) in America or Europe. The reasons are not clear but warrant further study and, possibly, targeted preventive measures, including periodontal care.

In this age of tight resources for care, it was calculated that the treatment of over 1600 pregnant women with all levels of severity of periodontal disease could save nearly USD\$14,000,000 (14 million).

The theme continues for the treatment of patients with diabetes or a history of cerebro-vascular accident (stroke). In a single year, patients with medical and dental coverage from a private single carrier exhibited average savings, in medical costs, of USD\$10,142 per patient in the

cerebro-vascular accident group and \$1,418 per patient in the diabetes group.

Yes, indeed, your smile may be connected to your overall health.

Source: International & American Association for Dental Research

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