

Fish oil could be therapy for periodontal disease

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Periodontitis, inflammation of the tissue surrounding the teeth, affects more than half of adults and is linked to an increased risk of stroke and other heart problems. To evaluate whether fish oil supplementation could be an adjunct therapy for periodontitis, Dr. Alison Coates from the University of South Australia and colleagues from the School of Dentistry at University of Adelaide in Australia reviewed evidence from eight unique studies that involved humans.

Their review of these studies showed that improvements in clinical measures were common in all studies, but were scientifically significant in two that used a combination of fish oil and aspirin. Although this is not conclusive evidence, intake of fish oil is recommended for health benefits beyond the teeth.

"I would recommend that people ensure they have a sufficient intake of long chain [omega-3 fatty acids](#) in their diet for general health," said Coates. "In Australia, these types of fatty acids are considered to be essential with ~500 mg recommended as the suggested dietary target. This equates to approximately 2 [fatty fish](#) meals per week."

There are no serious dangers to consuming fish oil. At high levels of fish oil above the GRAS limit, people may experience a delayed clotting time and at very high doses potential gastric upset. If people are taking blood thinning medication, then they should consult with a doctor.

The group reports that the evidence for fish oil being effective in

reducing periodontal symptoms is building but there is a need for more well designed studies that evaluate the supplement both alone and in combination with aspirin to be able to tease out whether fish oil by itself is effective. It is important that compliance to treatment is considered and that the dose and length of supplementation is appropriate. A clinical trial is underway in Australia that is investigating the effects of [fish oil](#) as adjunct therapy for periodontitis.

Results from this study will be presented April 24, 2012 at the Experimental Biology 2012 meeting in San Diego, CA.

Provided by Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology

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