

Estrogen therapy shown effective in reducing tooth and gum diseases in postmenopausal women

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Estrogen therapy has already been credited with helping women manage an array of menopause-related issues, including reducing hot flashes, improving heart health and bone density, and maintaining levels of sexual satisfaction. Now a new study suggests that the same estrogen therapy used to treat osteoporosis can actually lead to healthier teeth and gums. The study outcomes are being published online today in *Menopause*, the journal of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS).

As [estrogen levels](#) fall during menopause, [women](#) become more vulnerable to numerous health issues, including loss of bone mineral density which can lead to osteoporosis. Around the same time, changes in oral health also are common as teeth and gums become more susceptible to disease, which can lead to inflammation, pain, bleeding, and eventually loose or missing teeth.

In the Menopause article "Association between osteoporosis treatment and severe periodontitis in postmenopausal women," 492 postmenopausal Brazilian women aged 50 to 87 years, 113 in osteoporosis treatment and 379 not treated, were evaluated to determine whether osteoporosis treatment could help increase the [bone mineral density](#) in their jaws and, subsequently, improve overall [oral health](#).

The study found that the rate of occurrence of severe periodontitis was

44% lower in the postmenopausal osteoporosis-treatment group than in the untreated group. Treatment consisted of systemic estrogen alone or estrogen plus progestin, as well as calcium and vitamin D supplements, for a minimum of six months.

"Osteoporosis can occur throughout the body, including the jaw, and lead to an increased risk of periodontal disease," says Dr. JoAnn Pinkerton, NAMS executive director. "This study demonstrates that [estrogen therapy](#), which has proven to be effective in preventing bone loss, may also prevent the worsening of tooth and gum disease. All women, but especially those with low estrogen or on bisphosphonate treatment for osteoporosis, should make good dental care a part of their healthy lifestyles."

Provided by The North American Menopause Society

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