

# Periodontitis may raise the risk for developing dementia

March 15 2019

---

Gum disease (gingivitis) that goes untreated can become periodontitis. When this happens, the infection that affected your gums causes loss in the bone that supports your teeth. Periodontitis is the main cause of tooth loss in adults. Interestingly, periodontitis is also a risk factor for developing dementia, one of the leading causes for disability in older adults. A United Nations forecast estimates that 1 in 85 individuals will be diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, a form of dementia, by the year 2050. Reducing the risk factors that lead to dementia and Alzheimer's disease could potentially lower older adults' chances of developing those conditions.

Recently, researchers in South Korea studied the connection between chronic periodontitis and [dementia](#). They published their findings in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

The research team examined information from the National Health Insurance Service-Health Screening Cohort (NHIS-HEALS). In South Korea, the NHIS provides mandatory health insurance covering nearly all forms of health care for all Korean citizens. The agency also provides health screening examinations twice a year for all enrollees aged 40 years or older and maintains detailed health records for all enrollees.

The researchers looked at health information from 262,349 people aged 50 or older. All of the participants were grouped either as being healthy (meaning they had no chronic periodontitis) or as having been diagnosed with chronic periodontitis. The researchers followed the participants

from January 1, 2005 until they were diagnosed with dementia, died, or until the end of December 2015, whichever came first.

The researchers learned that people with chronic periodontitis had a 6 percent higher risk for dementia than did people without periodontitis. This connection was true despite behaviors such as smoking, consuming alcohol, and remaining physically active. The researchers said that to their knowledge, this is the first study to demonstrate that chronic periodontitis could be linked to a higher risk for dementia even after taking lifestyle behaviors into account.

The researchers suggested that future studies be conducted to investigate whether preventing and treating [chronic periodontitis](#) could lead to a reduced risk of dementia.

This summary is from "Association of Chronic Periodontitis on Alzheimer's Disease or Vascular Dementia." It appears online ahead of print in the February 2019 issue of the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

**More information:** Seulgie Choi et al, Association of Chronic Periodontitis on Alzheimer's Disease or Vascular Dementia, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2019). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.15828](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.15828)

Provided by American Geriatrics Society

Citation: Periodontitis may raise the risk for developing dementia (2019, March 15) retrieved 18 July 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-03-periodontitis-dementia.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is

provided for information purposes only.