

Study finds 'significant link' between tooth loss and fatal heart disease

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Maintaining good oral health is crucial, not only for a radiant smile, but also a healthy heart, according to a new Case Western Reserve University study. Researchers from the School of Dental Medicine found "significant" evidence linking tooth loss to an increased risk of death from cardiovascular disease (CVD).

Anita Aminoshariae, professor at the [dental school](#) and the study's lead researcher, said her comprehensive analysis also revealed that those with several lost [teeth](#) face an even higher chance of dying from [heart disease](#)—the nation's leading cause of death, according to the American Heart Association.

While the causal association between oral and cardiovascular disease is not well-understood, Aminoshariae said the link is generally believed to be a "predictive risk factor." In other words, the cause hasn't been established.

"Our findings clearly show that [tooth loss](#) is not just a dental issue, but a significant predictor of [cardiovascular disease](#) mortality," Aminoshariae said. "Maintaining good oral health is essential, not only for a healthy smile, but also for a healthy heart. This study underscores the importance of regular dental check-ups and preventive care to reduce the risk of serious cardiovascular events."

The results were [published](#) in the *Journal of Endodontics*.

Researchers conducted an exhaustive literature review—scouring more than a dozen respected scholarly research journals to see whether a connection exists between losing teeth and dying from CVD.

Among the findings:

- Overall connection: People who lost several teeth had a 66% higher chance of dying from heart-related issues compared to those who didn't.
- Variability in studies: While results from the studies vary, overall, they still pointed to the same conclusion.

Subgroup analysis

For people who had lost all their teeth, the risk of dying from CVD was much higher, and the results were consistent across the studies. For those with fewer than 10 teeth left, there was also a higher risk of CVD mortality, but the results varied more between the studies.

"The magic number is 10," Aminoshariae said. "For those who had 10 teeth or less, they're in trouble."

The researchers also checked if other factors considered in the studies affected the overall findings. They found that these differences didn't significantly change the results. The sensitivity analysis—which essentially double-checks the results—confirmed that losing teeth is indeed a risk factor for dying from CVD, Aminoshariae said.

More information: Anita Aminoshariae et al, Tooth Loss is a Risk Factor for Cardiovascular Disease Mortality: A Systematic Review with Meta-Analyses, *Journal of Endodontics* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/j.joen.2024.06.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joen.2024.06.012)

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