**Bleeding or Swollen Gums are one sign of a possible on coming stroke!**

**A person who has gum disease is 2-3X more likely chance to have a stroke!**

Bleeding or swollen gums (periodontitis) are signs that there may be changes in the flow of blood to our brains. Arteries in our brains can become hardened which will result in blockage of blood flow and oxygen to the brain (artherosclerosis).

This is the breeding grounds for strokes. Although every stroke victim is different and no one can predict when a stroke will strike just because your gums are going bad. Also, most everyone has some gum problems, but properly treated, the chance for a stroke caused by gum disease is reduced.

When not treated early, gum diseases (called Gingivitis), can lead to swollen and bleeding gums. Once at this advanced stage, the risk for a stroke at lease doubles.

What should anyone do when your gums get swollen and is bleeding?

Avoiding a stroke is highly recommended. 1 of every 6 strokes causes death. People who do not die immediately will have serious long term consequences, especially when a stroke victim is not properly treated quickly. Every minute a stroke victim is not properly treated will destroy thousands of brain cells (neurons). Dead brain cells do not recover.

All stroke victim should be transported to a medical facility that is prepared to care for stroke victims. It is important for all of us to know where your nearest hospital that has a stroke center. In our North Beach/Chinatown neighborhood, anyone who has a stroke should be taken (call 911 for an ambulance) to Chinese Hospital. Probably anyone on the east side of our city should be taken to our Chinese Hospital.

Our Historian had a stroke a few years ago, and was treated at a hospital with a stroke center and credits his excellent recovery to care provided by the Alta Bates hospital in Oakland.

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**Gum Disease & Risk of Stroke**

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**Published On: July 6, 2020**

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**Categories: Gum Disease**

**Gum disease is a very common oral health issue. The symptoms include swollen and bleeding gums caused by a bacterial infection. While it may not seem severe, there is an alarming statistic that suggests it may be more serious than previously thought. Studies show that having gum disease doubles your chances of suffering a stroke.**

**That means that you are twice as likely to have a stroke if you suffer from gum disease. The question is why? What is it about gum disease that can lead to having a stroke?**

**How Gum Disease Can Cause a Stroke**

**Bleeding gums and inflammation from gum disease can lead to changes in the flow of blood and oxygen to the brain. Large arteries in the brain can become hardened which increases the risk of blockages. A reduction or blockage of blood flow and oxygen to the brain leads to a stroke. A stroke can result in permanent brain damage and can be fatal if severe enough.**

**Signs of Gum Disease**

**Noticing the signs and symptoms of gum disease early can help you get the condition treated and significantly reduce your risk of stroke. Here’s what to look for:**

**Swollen gums**

**Bleeding gums**

**Red gums (natural gum color is pink or flesh color)**

**Receding gums (gums that have pulled away from the teeth)**

**Loose teeth**

**Sensitive teeth**

**Pain when chewing**

**Any other unusual gum symptoms**

**If you notice any of the above, you may be in the early or even advanced stages of gum disease. Catching gum disease early when the gums are only slightly inflamed and before gums start to recede or teeth become loose can reduce your stroke risk.**

**Treatment for Gum Disease**

**There are a range of treatment options for gum disease that range from a professional dental cleaning to surgical procedures. The best course of treatment will depend on the severity and the cause of your gum disease. Treatment options include:**

**A thorough dental cleaning. Sometimes all that is needed is a thorough professional dental cleaning to remove plaque and tartar that builds up along the gum line. Remove what is feeding the bacteria and the infection goes away.**

**Scaling and root planing. When plaque and tartar build up beneath the gum line, scaling is a procedure used to scrape it away. Planing involves smoothing out rough spots on the roots of the teeth to prevent bacteria from building up.**

**Surgical procedures. Sometimes it is necessary for the dentist to go way beneath the gum line to clean out plaque and tartar, requiring cutting into the gums. Other procedures like bone grafts and soft tissue grafts are used to restore bone and gum tissue that has been lost.**

**Preventing Gum Disease**

**Prevention is always the best medicine. Proper oral hygiene and gum care can prevent gum disease from getting a foothold. Here are the best steps to take to avoid gum disease:**

**Regular Dental Care. It is important to see your dentist for cleanings at least every 6 months. If you suffer from chronic and recurring gum disease, your dentist may recommend more frequent cleanings.**

**Good Oral Hygiene. Between professional cleanings, it is important to practice good oral hygiene habits at home, like brushing your teeth twice a day and flossing at least once a day.**

**Avoid Smoking. Smoking is linked to multiple oral health issues from gum disease to oral cancer.**

**Eat Healthy Foods. Following a healthy diet full of crunchy vegetables and fruits as well as dairy foods like milk and cheese are said to be good for your teeth. Avoid sugary foods and beverages.**

**Preventing gum disease will significantly reduce your chances of suffering a stroke, and these steps are crucial to prevention.**

**Visit Creekview Dental for Regular Oral Care**

**Preventing gum disease is easier when you are under the routine care of a dentist. Schedule regular appointments at Creekview Dental to have your teeth cleaned and your oral health examined. Professional tooth and gum care can improve your overall health in other ways as well.**

**Call (651) 738-8204 today or contact us to request an appointment. We look forward to helping you maintain excellent oral and general health.**

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**What We Know About the Link Between Gum Disease and Your Risk of a Stroke**

**Studies suggest that treating gum disease (with other stroke risk factors) could reduce your risk for stroke.**

**Gum bacteria known as P. gingivalis has been identified in carotid arteries, and gum infection bacteria known as Streptococcus sp DNA has been found in brain blood vessels.**

**Gum disease was linked to strokes caused by a hardening of large arteries in the brain and also with severe artery blockages.**

**Experts know there’s a link between gum disease and cardiovascular events, but now new research has put a spotlight on why this link exists.**

**According to two research abstracts Trusted Source being presented at the American Stroke Association’s International Stroke Conference, gum disease (also known as periodontitis or periodontal disease) was linked to a higher rate of strokes caused by the hardening of large arteries in the brain and also with severe artery blockages that haven’t yet caused symptoms.**

**The studies suggest that treating gum disease (with other stroke risk factors) could reduce your risk for stroke.**

**Gum disease is a chronic bacterial infection that impacts soft and hard structures supporting the teeth. It’s associated with inflammation, which seems to play a role in blood vessel hardening, also known as atherosclerosis.**

**The studies don’t show that gum disease can cause artery blockage or stroke, just that there’s a link.**

**Cardiovascular diseases, including strokes, are multi-factorial diseases.**

**Periodontal diseases could be one of the variables associated with cardiovascular diseases, but there are numerous other risk factors that make the cause-effect relationship effect difficult to determine, noted Paulo Camargo, DDS, FACD, a professor at the UCLA School of Dentistry.**

**While there could be sources of inflammation that impact blood vessels, researchers think the gums are the likely origin, noted Dr. Souvik Sen, a professor and chair of clinical neurology at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine in Columbia, who led both studies.**

**This is because the gum bacteria known as P. gingivalis has been identified in carotid arteries, and gum infection bacteria known as Streptococcus sp DNA has been found in brain blood vessels.**

**Pinpointing stroke factors**

**Here are the major findings from both studies:**

**Of 265 patients studied who experienced a stroke between 2015 and 2017, the team found that large artery strokes due to intracranial atherosclerosis were twice as common in patients with gum disease as in those without gum disease.**

**The people with gum disease were 3 times as likely to have a stroke involving blood vessels in the back of the brain, which controls vision, coordination, and other vital bodily functions.**

**Gum disease was more common in patients who had a stroke involving large blood vessels within the brain, yet not more common among those who had a stroke due to a blockage in blood vessels outside the skull.**

**Researchers examined two magnetic resonance images (MRIs) to evaluate 1,145 people who hadn’t experienced a stroke. They also conducted oral exams to classify the presence and severity of gum disease.**

**They discovered that arteries in the brain were severely blocked (50 percent or more) in 10 percent of those evaluated.**

**People with gingivitis, or inflammation of the gums, were twice as likely to have moderately severe narrowed brain arteries from plaque buildup compared to those with no gum disease.**

**After they adjusted for risk factors, those with gingivitis were 2.4 times as likely to have severely blocked brain arteries.**

**“It’s important for clinicians to recognize that gum disease is an important source of inflammation for their patients and to work with patients to address gum disease,” Sen said in a statement.**

**Inflammation leads to systematic ailments**

**Thomas E. Van Dyke, DDS, PhD, a periodontitis researcher, vice president for clinical and translational research at the Forsyth Institute, and professor in oral medicine, infection, and immunity at Harvard School of Dental Medicine, said the research confirms what he and others have found.**

**Sen’s team was able to further correlate that gum disease patients had a higher proportion of stroke due to posterior circulation disease, a specific subtype of stroke.**

**They also found people with gum disease had a significantly higher rate of stroke due to intracranial atherosclerosis (ICAS) compared to those without gum disease. Showing this localization sets this study apart, Van Dyke said.**

**People with ICAS, compared to other types of stroke, are at a higher risk of recurrent ischemic events and death, a 2018 studyTrusted Source found.**

**Research has indicated that local, chronic inflammation has a systemic impact on the body.**

**“Gums are a common space for chronic inflammation that people don’t do much about,” Van Dyke said. This is because gum disease doesn’t always hurt right away. Even if it does, many people ignore it.**

**“Chronic inflammation is not good for you,” he said. “[It] has an impact on whole-body health. It can have systemic implications.”**

**Gum disease treatment has been shown to improve control of high blood pressure, diabetes, and cholesterol, all of which are stroke risk factors, Sen said. He’s working on another trial to test what type of gum disease treatment can reduce the risk of stroke.**

**Having periodontal health is essential to maintain healthy teeth. “It might have the additional benefits of mitigating the risks for a cardiovascular event,” Camargo added.**