

GET WISE

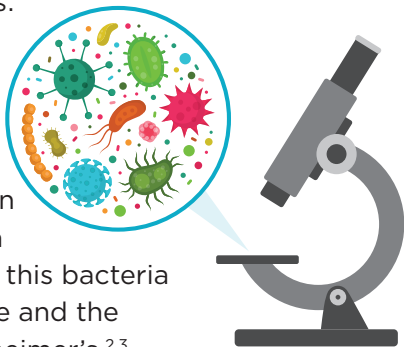
About your oral health

Alzheimer's and gum disease

Gum health plays an important role in your overall health. But could gum disease be linked to Alzheimer's disease? Researchers think so.

In one study, researchers analyzed brain tissue from Alzheimer's patients.¹ In 96 percent of cases, they found the bacteria *P. gingivalis* and a toxic enzyme it produces. That same bacteria increased dental plaque found in Alzheimer's patients.

Researchers found that this bacteria can travel from the mouth to the brain and can destroy brain cells. This suggests a connection between this bacteria found in gum disease and the development of Alzheimer's.^{2,3}



While more needs to be learned about the connection between oral health and Alzheimer's, you can fight gum disease today by brushing twice a day, flossing daily and seeing your dentist regularly.

Did you know?

More than 6 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease—the most common type of dementia.⁴



Quick bites

Many people with dementia often have multiple oral health problems. Here are things to watch for:⁵

- **Dry mouth.** This is a result of reduced saliva flow often caused by medications, and can lead to ulcers, gum disease, denture sores and more.
- **Cavities.** People with Alzheimer's often eat softer, stickier and sugary foods. They also frequently have a significant amount of plaque.
- **Dentures.** These can become difficult to wear due to lack of saliva, decreased muscle control and less supporting bone. These should be removed and cleaned daily.
- **Broken teeth.** These occur more frequently in seniors. A broken tooth requires immediate treatment.
- **Abscesses in the teeth or gums.** These can be very painful and also require immediate treatment.



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¹ Watts A et al., "Inflammation as a potential mediator for the association between periodontal disease and Alzheimer's disease," *Neuropsychiatr Dis Treat*, (2008), 865- 76. ² Sparks Stein P et al., "Serum antibodies to periodontal pathogens are a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease," *Alzheimer's & Dementia* no. 8, (2012). ³ Abbayya K et al., "Association between periodontitis and Alzheimer's disease," *North American Journal of Medical Science*, (2015), 241-6. ⁴ Alzheimer's Association, "Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures," web. ⁵ grin! Magazine, "Help a loved one with Alzheimer's disease have better oral health," web.

