

Clinical Oral Health

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Oral health is a core indicator of general health and quality of life [1]. Mouth is the gateway to our body so if we have good oral health, it directly indicates that we have a healthy body. Billions of people are affected by oral diseases which include dental caries, gingivitis, periodontitis, oral cancers, HIV, or facial defects and trauma, cleft lip and cleft palate etc. Once the oral health deteriorates it becomes a risk factor for other non-communicable diseases affecting overall health like cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases etc.

Our oral health and general health are related and it's proven that oral health is a window to overall health.

What is oral health?

Oral health is basically the health of teeth, gums, the entire oral facial system that allows us to smile, speak, and chew [2].

Good oral health means keeping the teeth free from decay, healthy coral pink colour gums and firm gum tissue indicates healthy periodontium and underlying bone.

Oral bacteria

Our mouth consists of bacteria which grows in the environment present in the oral cavity. These bacteria's are provided with a source of water, nutrients and moderate temperature.

In return these bacteria help in the breakdown of food and kill the bad bacteria by producing certain proteins that control the growth of bad bacteria.

Good bacterias in the oral cavity tends to thrive in neutral to high PH environment leading to have a better smelling breath and no chance of dry mouth, cavities or gum problems [3].

On the other hand, an increase in the growth of bad bacteria in the oral cavity tends to thrive low in PH, thus increasing the risk of developing caries, gum inflammation, and bad rotten egg smell.

How poor oral hygiene is linked to overall health

Maintaining poor oral health leads to dental caries not only in children but also in adults and infants. Everyday a thin film of plaque builds on the tooth which consists of bacteria, debris, saliva etc [4]. These bacteria start to eat up the enamel layer of the tooth creating a small progressing cavity. These plaque present along the gumline, increase and form hard calculus which are difficult to remove using a brush. Once the calculus is formed in the gum line then bacteria infect gums causing gingivitis. As it progresses these microbes enter beyond the gums affecting the periodontium causing bone loss or periodontitis.

Consumption of junk, sticky, sugary diet causes bad breath or HALITOSIS

Food particles when not brushed properly remain stuck between the teeth for a long-time bacteria's consume it, emitting chemicals such as hydrogen sulfide which smells like a rotten egg.

Oral health is a gateway to overall health

- Bad bacterias from the oral cavities spreads through the bloodstream and attaches to an area in your heart causing

infection in the inner lining of your heart valve causing endocarditis.

- When these bacterias travel through the bloodstream and clog the arteries causing infection and inflammation leading to cardiovascular diseases.
- Oral bacteria when pulled into your lungs causes pneumonia or respiratory diseases.
- Increase in blood glucose level in our body helps in the growth of bad bacteria in the oral cavity. These bacteria directly affect the periodontium, gum. So controlled blood sugar level improves periodontal care.
- Opportunistic microbes affect the oral mucosa causing painful oral lesion in patients with compromised immunity such as HIV
- Patients with osteoporosis have weaknesses in the bone. Due to poor oral hygiene this can affect the periodontium.
- Diseases like Alzheimer’s, rheumatoid arthritis, sjogren’s syndrome etc are diseases linked with poor dental hygiene [5].

How to protect oral health?

- Oral health can be protected by balancing the good and bad bacteria in the oral cavity. By controlling the intake of high calorie foods, sticky, junk and soft drinks [1].
- Brushing teeth twice daily for 2 mins.
- Using medium bristle fdi approved brushes and fluoridated toothpaste.
- Floss daily using dental floss or can use interdental brushes.
- Replacing the toothbrush every 3 months
- Using mouthwash to remove food stuck after Flossing and brushing.
- Saltwater rinsing regularly
- Regular dental visits every 6 months.
- Avoid consumption of alcohol, chewing tobacco and smoking.

Gum massaging - use of forefinger and gently massage your gums for 2 mins will increase blood circulation of the gum tissue and keep it firm and healthy.

Clinical case

Patient aged 18 years old came to the clinic with the complaint of bleeding gums and bad breath. On examination calculus +++, bleeding on probing positive. Malocclusion and malaligned teeth. Pt diagnosed with chronic generalised gingivitis

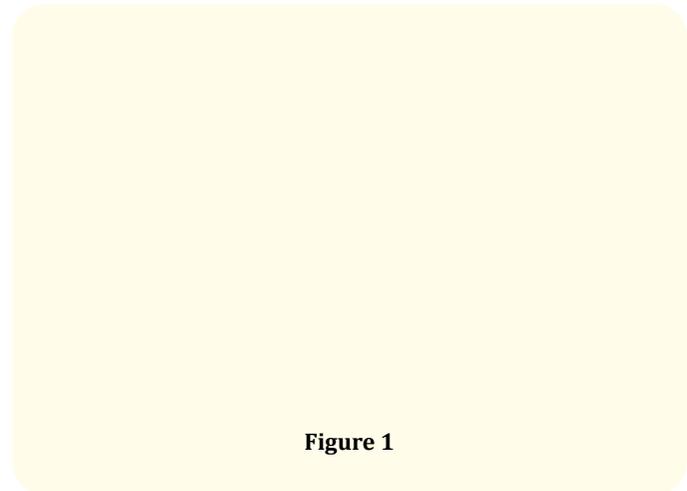


Figure 1

Patient advised scaling and gave oral hygiene instructions.

After scaling pic showing no calculus present but the gums are inflamed and bleeding can be seen.

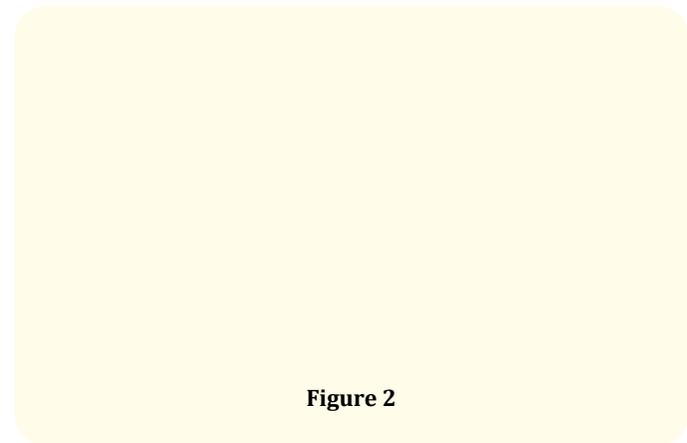


Figure 2

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