

Floss for Long Life

Men had a 72 percent greater risk of developing coronary disease... if they had had periodontitis.

Q. I've heard there's a correlation between long life and flossing our teeth. How can this be?

T.R., White Sands, New Mexico

A. This correlation is based on a study conducted by researchers at Harvard Medical School. They studied more than 150 people who lived to be over the age of 100.

Their conclusions identified a variety of factors that contributed to the participants' longevity. Amazingly, one of the most important of these findings was flossing the teeth daily. Daily flossing regularly removes bacteria from the teeth and gums and thus helps to prevent periodontal disease and gingivitis.

In another study, periodontitis, which includes the absence of teeth, was associated with a 23 percent to 25 percent increase in the risk of coronary artery disease. Shockingly, men had a whopping 72 percent greater risk of developing coronary disease in their youth if they had had periodontitis. Gingivitis was associated with a 42 percent increased risk.

A new and dangerous bacteria known as Nanobacteria has been implicated in causing heart disease, coronary artery plaque and a host of other ailments. It gets its name from its ultramicroscopic size—about 1,000 times smaller than regular bacteria. Only recently discovered, it's now the smallest bacteria on record.

Nanobacteria grows very slowly, reproducing only every three days. Consequently, due to this latent period, it may be years before symptoms of disease are discovered.

One of its harmful characteristics is that, when in the body, it coats itself with calcium. This protective exterior hardens, forming a calcified shell.

The body then mistakes this for normal bone calcium. Calcium is a natural substance that's plentiful in the bloodstream. The result is that instead of fighting this bacteria, the body easily accepts its disguised form as it produces calcifications in different areas of the body, such as the blood vessels. This may eventually lead to carotid artery disease, coronary artery disease, kidney stones, polycystic kidney disease, prostate calcification and other diseases.

Fortunately, doctors are now able to test for this harmful bacteria by using a special blood test. Once found, this devastating invader can be treated.

Because so much bacteria initially enters your body through your teeth and gums, you can certainly see why good dental care is absolutely vital. Your continued good health may depend on it!

Q. I am a 25-year-old woman and I have started developing acne, which I've never had. What can I do?

R.W., Nashville, Tennessee

A. First, make a list of any medications you are taking. Include nutritional supplements.

Certain medications such as corticosteroids, prednisone and topical steroid creams may produce steroid acne (too much stress also can raise cortisol levels and trigger acne flare-ups). Many birth control pills contain certain synthetic progestones, which may worsen the condition. I recommend you use Ortho Tri-Cyclen, which is less likely to cause acne.

On the nutritional level, foods high in iodine, or vitamin supplements with high amounts of iodine, can aggravate acne. Iodine is added to table salt, so I suggest you avoid pizzas, fast foods and chips.

I strongly recommend a cleansing diet. You should drink at least two quarts of filtered water a day and take a fiber supplement to help prevent constipation, which is commonly associated with acne.

Cosmetics are one of the most common aggravating factors for acne in women. These products can sometimes take six months to trigger a flare-up, so lay off the makeup for a while until the skin is able to heal.

Azelaic acid is a natural product that is effective for all forms of acne. I recommend using a cream twice a day that has 20 percent azelaic acid.

Alpha-hydroxy acid, such as glycolic acid, is also effective. Make sure, however, that the glycolic acid does not contain any oils or other ingredients that could cause you to break out.

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