



Men and Oral Health

There are many oral health issues that are specific to men. Data show that men do less for their oral health and are much less likely than women to visit the dentist. This is despite the fact that most common oral diseases and oral health conditions are easy to prevent.

Men's oral health:

- 34 percent of men age 30 to 54 have periodontitis (gum disease), compared to 23 percent of women.¹
- 56 percent of men age 55 to 90 have periodontitis, compared to 44 percent of women.¹
- 33 percent of men have not had a medical checkup in the past year.¹

Periodontal disease (gum disease) in men

Periodontal disease occurs when untreated plaque hardens into tartar, causing a breakdown of the gum fibers that hold gums tightly to teeth. Periodontal disease can have serious health consequences. See your dentist if you experience loose or separating teeth, persistent bad breath, or red, swollen or bleeding gums.

Medication and oral health

Men are more likely to suffer from heart attacks, and are more likely to be on medications that cause dry mouth, which increases the risk of cavities. Certain blood pressure medications and antidepressants may also have similar side effects.

Smoking and men's oral health

If you use tobacco products such as cigarettes or smokeless tobacco, you are at an increased risk for periodontal disease and oral cancers.² If oral cancer is left untreated, it can spread, leading to facial disfigurement due to surgery, chronic pain and even death. More than 34,000 people will be diagnosed with oral cancer and 8,000 die each year from oral and pharyngeal (throat) diseases, so if you smoke or use tobacco products, it's important to see a dentist regularly.³

For a healthy mouth and body, take your oral health into your own hands by brushing and visiting your dentist regularly and abstaining from bad oral health habits.

¹"Destructive Periodontal Disease in Adults 30 Years of Age and Older in the United States, 1988-1994", Journal of Periodontology, January 1999, Vol. 70, No. 1.

²"Why is Oral Health Important for Men?", Academy of General Dentistry, www.knowyourteeth.com/infobites/abc/article/?abc=M&iid=312&aid=1266, accessed 4/2017.

³Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institutes of Health, 2000.