

Always Keep Your SMILE, Always Keep Your HEALTH

Jeanne Calment from Aries, France, was born in 1875 and died in 1997, at the age of 122 years! Asked the secret to her record longevity, she answered, *"Always keep your smile. That's how I explain my long life."*

HEALTH AND LONGEVITY

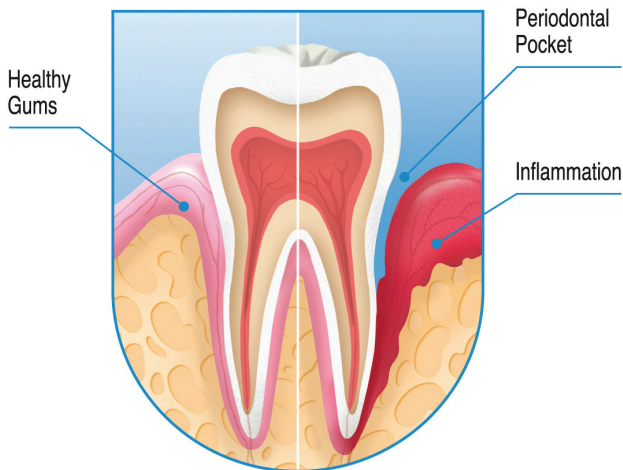
Though Ms. Calment may have been referring to a positive attitude, her words inadvertently have a scientific basis, related to oral health. Always keep your smile, i.e., always keep your teeth, always keep them healthy, always keep them free of disease, and prolong your health and longevity.

Recent scientific studies have revealed some astounding new discoveries, linking gum infections and abscessed teeth to cardiovascular risk, including heart attacks. This so called "Oral-Systemic Connection" is the most important advancement in health care since the germ theory of the 1800's.



Oral inflammation is the #1 source of chronic inflammation in humans, and appears to significantly affect inflammatory diseases throughout the body.

In his recently published book, *Beat the Heart Attack Gene*, Bradley Bale, M.D. describes the causes of atherosclerosis (plaque build up in the blood vessels, including around the heart). The major concern is inflammation. One of the newly validated root causes of inflammation is certain destructive types of bacteria, from the mouth, entering the bloodstream. These bacteria gain access to the normally sterile bloodstream through periodontal disease (gum infections) and dental caries (cavities in teeth).



The mouth is populated by over 600 types of bacteria, most of which are very beneficial to digestion. There are about 11 bacteria found in the mouth that can be harmful, when they are present in high concentrations. These bacteria produce acids as a by product of their metabolism. Some can dissolve tooth structure causing cavities, while others harbor beneath the gum line and irritate the gum around the teeth. Over time these harmful bacteria will create localized infections that cause the gums to become inflamed and bleed. These bleeding sites provides access for the harmful bacteria to enter the bloodstream.

This is where it gets very interesting, and possibly life-changing for some people!

Recent studies have shown that one bacteria type, from the mouth, causes the lining of the blood vessels to weaken, allowing other bacteria to seep into the vessel walls. Inside the walls, these bacteria stimulate a localized infection and inflammation response. Examination of the swelling sites in the blood vessel walls, called "plaque", reveal a high

concentration of oral bacteria in many cases. When a plaque ruptures, like a pimple bursting into the bloodstream, it may form a blood clot that blocks the vessel. This blockage prevents the important transport of oxygen to all cells downstream. This can result in events such as heart attacks and strokes. A recent study examining these blood clots after acute heart attacks, found a concentration of oral bacteria 16 times greater than in the surrounding bloodstream.

One type of oral bacteria was found in 78% of the blood clots of acute heart attack victims.

The implication of all this research is that bacteria from the mouth can enter the bloodstream, invade the blood vessel walls, create infections and inflammation, and can be associated with events that can result in serious health effects that include heart attacks and strokes.

WHAT'S THE TAKE HOME LESSON?

- Develop good dental hygiene habits
- Spend at least 3 minutes brushing teeth two times a day
- Use floss at least once a day to clean between teeth
- Brush your tongue to remove bacteria and freshen your breath
- Maintain a well-balanced diet filled with anti-inflammatory foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, lean protein such as wild caught game and fresh fish, whole grains and healthy fats; avoid processed sugars and foods high in sodium. To learn more about anti-inflammatory foods, call 727-362-6866 to schedule a session with Back 2 Normal's Integrative Health Coach.
- Make sure you never develop periodontal disease by monitoring for swollen or bleeding gums and seeing your Dentist and Dental Hygienist regularly.



- In cases of existing periodontal problems, simple saliva tests can evaluate for elevated concentrations of the eleven harmful bacteria. A simple finger stick test can evaluate for increased inflammation in the bloodstream. New simplified treatment options are effectively eradicating this significant health concern.

*So remember,
always keep your smile
& your health!*

Thank you to Dr Wilkerson for sharing this valuable information about dental hygiene and better health.

DeWitt C. Wilkerson D.M.D. is co-owner of DuPont & Wilkerson Dentistry, located at 390 4th Street North, St. Petersburg. He is the Director of Dental Medicine for the Dawson Academy for Advanced Dental Study, Graduate Professor at the University of Florida College of Dentistry, Board Member for the American Academy for Oral & Systemic Health (AAOSH) and active member in The American Academy of Restorative Dentistry. His practice emphasis is Restorative Dentistry, Complex Problem Solutions, and Total Wellness. He is receiving new patients by appointment at (727) 282-1980.