

The CAP Connection: The Surprising Link Between Oral Health and Heart Disease

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Most people don't spend a lot of time worrying about their oral health unless there's a clear cause for concern like the onset of tooth or jaw pain, sore gums, or a new cavity. You likely believe that as long as your teeth and gums seem normal, there's no reason to rush to the dentist. But Thomas E. Levy, MD, JD, says a pain-free mouth doesn't always indicate a clean bill of health. Quite the contrary. He says the vast majority of heart attacks--yes, heart attacks--along with other serious health conditions and diseases, are caused by hidden, symptom-free infections in the

mouth. The worst of these infections is called chronic apical periodontitis, or CAP, a vastly exaggerated form of periodontal disease. And according to Dr. Levy, it is perhaps the most dangerous (yet, silent) condition of all.



"People assume that the most dangerous and toxic infections in the teeth would be the ones that are the most painful," says Dr. Levy, author of Hidden Epidemic: Silent Oral Infections Cause Most Heart Attacks and Breast Cancers. "That's not always the case. Your teeth don't have to hurt to be

dangerous, or deadly. In fact, studies reveal a cause-and-effect relationship between heart attacks and pathogens from 'silent' chronic infections in the teeth."

Dr. Levy says studies already show correlations between periodontal disease and heart disease. They also reveal links between periodontal disease and a shocking number of serious illnesses like breast cancer, pancreatic cancer, prostate cancer, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, diabetes, hypertension, osteoporosis, arthritis, lupus, and others. Because CAP is an exaggerated form of periodontal disease, Dr. Levy says any study linking a disease or medical condition to any form of chronic periodontitis also effectively links CAP to the same condition. The same goes for root-canaled teeth. All teeth affected by periodontitis, CAP, or root canal contain the same pathogenic bacteria.

"Ninety-five percent of all teeth that become infected go into a state of chronic infection despite the fact that they never become painful, and are not apparent to the patient or dentist," says Dr. Levy. "Further, somewhere between 7 and 15 percent of all teeth have some degree of infection. The problem is, when infections are not identified, they feed chronic inflammation systemically throughout the body--and this is when people get sick."

Dr. Levy says oral infections go unnoticed so often because regular X-rays can miss up to 50 percent of chronically infected teeth. In fact, many brilliant dentists don't realize that a grossly abscessed (and, therefore, highly dangerous) tooth can be completely asymptomatic.



Luckily, there is a way to identify these "silent" infections. A relatively new technology called a 3-D cone beam imaging X-ray can identify a large majority of the infected teeth missed by regular X-ray. Using this technology, dentists and doctors can now identify infected teeth and gums and treat them to effectively prevent or stop the progression of a disease.

Keep reading to discover some insights from Dr. Levy to help you understand the link between illness and infections of the teeth and gums--and learn what you should do to safeguard your health.

First, everyone should be carefully evaluated for "silent" infections... A diagnostic test called 3-D cone beam imaging can reveal silent infections before they lead to heart attack or disease. This test provides an in-depth scan of the teeth, gums, and sinuses, and identifies hidden infections that are completely painless and symptom-free. Levy supports making 3-D cone beam imaging a standard part of patient care.

"Getting screened for asymptomatic infected teeth should be a part of routine medical and dental workups," says Levy. "Modern medicine does not currently go far enough to address the root causes of many illnesses today. If we're really going to practice preventative medicine, chronically infected teeth must be identified so they can be treated."

...but your dentist must know what to look for. Three-dimensional cone beam imaging provides a tremendous amount of information about the inside of the head and neck. Therefore, it's very important to ask the interpreting dentist, radiologist, or technician to specifically be on the lookout for evidence of apical infection of all the teeth. When you go in for this diagnostic test, be sure to tell them they should be looking specifically for evidence of apical infection in all of the teeth.

Don't forget to have your children evaluated too. CAP doesn't lead to illness just in adults, warns Levy. Even five-year-old children are susceptible to developing serious illness caused by silent infections in the mouth. In fact, such children can just as readily have a significant disease secondary to a symptom-free chronically infected tooth as an 85-year-old might.

"If you overlook examining the teeth of a five- or six-year-old who has had childhood leukemia, you could be missing a major chance to cure that child," says Dr. Levy. "Children with childhood leukemia should be evaluated for asymptomatic chronically infected teeth."

Recognize that toxins increase oxidation, the source of all disease. Dr. Levy explains that infections in the mouth are the most potent source of toxins in the body. The more unaddressed infections you have, the more toxins are produced. These toxins contribute to a body-wide state of inflammation and increased oxidative stress, which is the source of all disease.

Oxidation is a normal component of the body's healthy metabolic activity, but when too many biomolecules in the body oxidize, they can no longer function, and disease sets in. When you've got a CAP tooth, each time you chew with that infected tooth, you are literally squeezing the toxic contents of that tooth into the draining venous systems and the draining lymphatics. Then your toxic load increases, which increases oxidation throughout the body. It's a vicious cycle that can be stopped if you identify CAP and address it right away.

Know that root canals lead to heart attacks (and many other problems too). While some root canal patients can experience good health for many years, there is still a cause-and-effect relationship between root canals and heart attacks. In one study examining the blood clots of people having heart attacks, researchers found the presence of pathogens typical for root canals in about 80 percent of the patients and found pathogens typical for gum disease in about 35 percent of the patients.

"Root-canaled teeth often become highly toxic and can lead to chronic degenerative diseases," says Dr. Levy. "If you can avoid having a root canal, do so. In many cases, having the tooth pulled is a far safer alternative."

If you do have a CAP, know that extraction may be the best option for your health. *"A CAP tooth that goes untreated is, statistically speaking, more substantially toxic than a CAP tooth that has been root-canaled," says Dr. Levy. "The root canal process 'debulks' and removes a lot of the infection in the tooth, but it doesn't sterilize the tooth. So often a person who is not in pain may opt to keep a CAP tooth and may either have it root-canaled or do nothing at all. But these are not the best options for your health. The best option would be having the tooth extracted."*

The bottom line: Don't wait until you've had a heart attack to investigate what's really going on in your mouth. Finding and addressing CAP today--or even a lesser infection in the teeth or gums--could make all the difference in your health and well-being. It could even save your life.

"People think many of the deadliest diseases today are incurable," concludes Dr. Levy. "But heart disease, breast cancer, and many other illnesses are viewed as incurable only because much of the medical community doesn't realize they are connected to infections in your mouth. Addressing these infections head-on is the key to a life without illness. And the sooner patients, doctors, and dentists recognize this crucial connection, the better."

About the Author:

Thomas E. Levy, MD, JD, is the author of *Hidden Epidemic: Silent Oral Infections Cause Most Heart Attacks and Breast Cancers* (MedFox Publishing, 2017, ISBN: 978-0-983-77287-3, \$29.95). He is a board-certified cardiologist and a lawyer and is the author of 10 other groundbreaking medical books, including *Curing the Incurable: Vitamin C, Infectious Diseases, and Toxins*; *Primal Panacea*; and *Death by Calcium*. He is one of the leading vitamin C experts in the world, and he frequently lectures at medical conferences and to groups of people around the globe about the proper role of vitamin C and other antioxidants in optimizing treatment protocols for the most common chronic degenerative diseases, including heart disease, cancer, and advanced chronic infections, such as Lyme.

About the Book:

Hidden Epidemic: Silent Oral Infections Cause Most Heart Attacks and Breast Cancers (MedFox Publishing, 2017, ISBN: 978-0-983-77287-3, \$29.95) is available at www.medfoxpub.com and Amazon

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