

Heart TALK

Heart-healthy and Stroke-free Living with Dr. Amy L. Doneen, DNP, ARNP

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Thoughts from Dr. Amy



Dr. Amy L. Doneen, DNP, ARNP

Healthy Gums Can Prevent a Heart Attack!

A habit that takes five minutes a day can add years to your life and lowers your risk for heart attack, stroke, diabetes, colds, flu and arthritis. In fact, [a recent study](#) of more than 5,600 older adults found that one of the simplest—and cheapest—keys to a long life is taking great care of your teeth with daily brushing and flossing, along with regular dental checkups.

Nearly half of adults ages 30 and older have periodontal (gum) disease, a bacterial infection of the gums, connective tissue and bones supporting the teeth that can double or even triple risk for a heart attack or stroke, recent research suggests. That's powerful motivation to fight heart disease with a toothbrush, floss and excellent dental care! In honor of National Gum Care Month, here are 5

steps to help you achieve optimal oral health in September and beyond.

1. Brush and floss twice a day.

Although you may have seen recent headlines claiming that there isn't much scientific evidence to support flossing, consider this: In the study discussed above, those who never flossed had a 30% higher death rate during the study period than those who flossed daily! In addition, the researchers found that never brushing at night hiked mortality risk 20 to 25 percent, compared to nightly brushing. It takes at least 24 hours for oral bacteria to form into dental plaque and then tartar, a hard mineral deposit that can cause gums to get swollen and inflamed, leading to the earliest stage of gum disease: gingivitis. We recommend brushing with a sonic toothbrush for best results.

2. Use the right flossing technique.

Form a C-shape with the floss and wrap it around each tooth to clean its surface, instead of just snapping the floss up and down, which doesn't clean the tooth properly.

3. Go to bed with a clean mouth.

Since your mouth makes less saliva when you are sleeping to wash your teeth and gums, it's

particularly important to brush and floss thorough at bedtime. Dentists also advise using a tongue scraper to remove debris before you go to sleep.

4. Sugarless gum containing xylitol has an antimicrobial effect.

You may want to chew it between meals to reduce risk for gum disease. Several studies also show that xylitol products, such as gum, lozenges, and toothpaste, help prevent cavities.

5. Get a dental cleaning every 3 months, or as advised by your dental provider.

Ask to be screened for gum disease, which typically involves a painless visual inspection and exam of your gums, using a mirror and periodontal probe to check for signs of oral infection. If you have gum disease, treatment typically includes scaling and root planing (deep cleaning of tooth surfaces to remove plaque and tartar). Your dentist may also recommend using prescription mouthwash, dental trays with antimicrobial gel, or oral antibiotics.

Follow the HASPC on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) for the latest news on heart health and wellness.



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Proof that Optimal Medical Care and Oral Wellness Can Quickly Shrink Arterial Plaque and Stabilize Cardiovascular Disease

By Amy Doneen, DNP, ARNP and Bradley Bale, MD



Just in time for National Gum Care Month, a new study, published in the peer-reviewed journal Archives of Medical Science, demonstrates that a comprehensive approach to heart attack, stroke and diabetes prevention that includes oral

wellness—our patented Bale Doneen Method—can quickly shrink the size of arterial plaque deposits by more than 50% in patients with cardiovascular disease (CVD), the leading killer of American men and women.

Together with scientists from Johns Hopkins Ciccarone Center for Prevention of Heart Disease, we studied 324 patients at the Heart Attack & Stroke Prevention Center in Spokane, Washington, all of whom received comprehensive cardiovascular risk reduction treatments that included lipid-lowering medications (statin, niacin, and/ezetimibe), lifestyle modification, and additional therapies for those with insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, metabolic syndrome and other CV risks.

Dramatic Reductions in Heart Attack and Stroke Risk

During the first year of treatment, our personalized medical management of these patients lead to a 52.7% decrease in the size of plaque deposits in their neck arteries, compared to baseline, as measured by carotid intima media thickness (cIMT) ultrasound imaging. Not only did the plaque get smaller, but it also stabilized, helping these patients avoid heart attacks and strokes. (None of these events occurred during the study.)

After just one year of our individualized medical management, outcomes were as follows:

- A 50% decrease in lipid-rich arterial plaque (the most dangerous kind);
- A 43% rise in calcified plaque (the stable form that does NOT cause heart attack and stroke);
- A 31% drop in triglycerides
- A 25% drop in LDL (bad) cholesterol;
- A 6% rise in heart-protective HDL cholesterol;
- A 5% decrease in systolic blood pressure.

Further benefits were seen during the second year of treatment, including:

- A 78.4% decrease in lipid-rich plaque
- A 56% rise in calcified plaque
- An 87% decrease in the difference between maximum and mean cIMT, indicating arterial wall healing and reduced vascular wall inflammation.

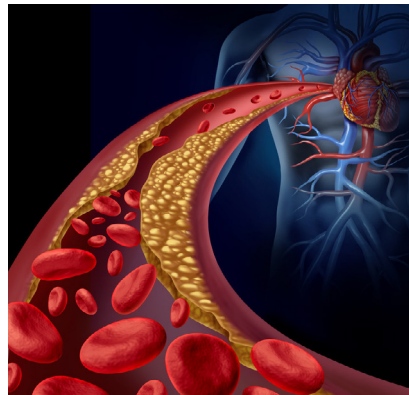
Healthy Gums and Oral Wellness Can Save Lives!

Optimal oral health is a key component of the Bale Doneen Method, which is based on a disease/inflammatory approach to vascular wellness. Given the multifactorial nature of CVD, and the well-established oral-systemic connection, a medical/dental team approach is essential to help patients achieve optimal cardiovascular wellness. We offer a 2-day CME/CE course

for medical and dental providers that teaches the necessary measures to collaborate effectively on heart attack and stroke prevention.

To advance this collaboration, we will soon be publishing a new paper on recognition of CV risk in the dental office that highlights the causal role of high-risk oral pathogens in systemic inflammation and arterial disease, a process we call “the atherogenic triad.” As evidence mounts that arresting these periodontal villains reduces heart attack and stroke, there’s also a growing recognition that for many patients, CVD is a medical problem with a dental solution.

The Bale Doneen Method offers more than an evidence-based approach to prevent, halt or treat CVD. It is also an educational platform that strives to unite all of these medical and dental providers in harnessing leading-edge science in the fight to eradicate the no. 1 threat to our patients: CVD—not just in National Gum Care Month, but throughout the year, in a collaboration that really is lifesaving!



Apple, Tarragon and Chicken Salad



Did you know that apples are called “nature’s toothbrush” because their slightly acidic nature and fiber-rich flesh help clean your teeth as you eat them? Here is an easy, delicious recipe for a heart- and tooth-healthy lunch or dinner.

Recipes for the heart

Ingredients

2 tart red apples (such as Cameo Apples)	2 tablespoons fresh, chopped tarragon
2 celery stalks (diced)	1 tablespoon fresh, chopped parsley
2 chicken breasts (skinless, cooked, diced, about 2 cups)	1/4 teaspoon salt (optional)
1/4 cup plain non-fat Greek yogurt	1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/2 cup raisins	16 lettuce leaves (Bibb, Romaine, green or red leaf)
1/4 cup low-fat mayonnaise	

Cut apples in quarters, remove core, and chop. Mix all ingredients except lettuce in a medium bowl. Arrange lettuce on four serving plates and top with apple and chicken salad. Adapted from the [USDA.gov](http://www.usda.gov) website. Makes four servings.