

# The link between dental hygiene and heart health



You know it's a good idea to brush your teeth daily. But did you know that how often and how well you brush your teeth could have implications for your heart health?



## The study:

It's not a new idea that dental hygiene and heart disease are linked; many studies have shown that gum disease can worsen blood pressure and interfere with medications that treat hypertension. Poor dental health is also known to pose a risk to people with heart valve problems.

### A 2021 study, however, has taken this idea a step further:

Researchers found that after adjusting for various factors, people who reported brushing their teeth less than twice a day for less than two minutes had a 3x higher risk for heart disease compared to those who brushed twice daily for at least two minutes.

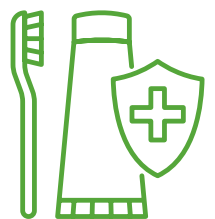
The study's lead researcher, Dr. Shogo Matsui, made it clear that this study was not meant to prove cause and effect but rather to establish a connection between an everyday habit and overall cardiovascular risk.



## The question:

If this study does not show causation, how is this link occurring? Here are two possible explanations for these findings.

1. People who are more attentive to their dental health are more fastidious in the rest of their habits.
2. Inflammation is a key part of gum disease and a powerful predictor of cardiovascular issues. Inflammation in one part of the body may be causing or associated with inflammation elsewhere.



## A known link:

While the reason for the link between dental hygiene and heart health isn't clear, the benefits of taking proper care of your teeth are. Brush your teeth twice a day for two minutes using fluoride toothpaste, according to the American Dental Association guidelines, to get the full benefits for your whole health.

Questions about your heart health? Visit [DignityHealth.org/Bakersfield/Heart](https://www.dignityhealth.org/bakersfield/heart) or schedule an appointment with your cardiologist or primary care provider to learn more.

Source: American Heart Association