

# CoQ10 & Periodontal Disease

by Margy Squires

Open wide, your health may be inside!

When your mama told you to watch your mouth, periodontal disease (PD) might not have been what she had in mind but she still would have been right. The health of your mouth, specifically your gums, could be a predictor for more serious disorders, including lung infections, heart disease, pancreatic cancer, ulcers and make inflammatory conditions like diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis symptoms worse.

Periodontal or gum disease starts silently and progresses over time. Although no age is too young, you may be surprised to learn an estimated 75% of Americans over the age of 35 are affected by periodontal disease and it's the number one reason for adult tooth loss. Periodontal means literally "around the tooth" so PD affects supporting gums, fibrous tissue and bone structures. Your risk is lower if you brush after meals and floss daily to keep gums clean and healthy. Professional cleanings every six months can remove plaque and tartar buildup as well as screen for PD. So who's at risk and why?

It's out of control bacteria that links PD to other disorders. In the normal process of eating, bacteria and saliva in your mouth break down food, leaving a film around teeth and gums. Acids in bacteria can attack tooth enamel causing cavities but more important is its role in plaque. Plaque hardens into tartar around the gum line. Gums (gingiva) become irritated, inflamed and even bleed during brushing, a condition called *gingivitis*, the first stage of PD. Without treatment, plaque continues down the gum line to the fibrous tissue and eventually to bone structures, causing the next stage, *periodontitis*. Deep pockets form as the gums pull away from teeth, harboring more bacteria and plaque. Teeth become unstable and loose. Sometimes surgical intervention is required to remove teeth and infected tissue. At any time, bacteria from the mouth can spread via the bloodstream to other parts of the body. Advanced PD can be painful, affect your ability to eat and get nutrients, decrease immunity and increase systemic inflammation.



The role of inflammation in your body is a natural response to an "attack", whether the source is bacteria, viruses, injury or other "irritants". The marked redness and swelling of inflammation alerts you that something is going on in cells and tissues. If you're healthy, the inflammation quietly goes away as your immune system takes care of the problem. However, if the inflammation persists and becomes chronic, irreversible damage can occur.

Given that proper dental hygiene offers a preventative role, diet and nutritional status are also key players. Healthy gums are critical for avoiding PD but essential in reversing the disease. Naturally, it starts with a good diet. Cruciferous veggies and fruits help massage gums while refined carbs and soft, sugary foods promote plaque. Those with Sjogren's or on medications that cause dry mouth may not have enough saliva and may be prone to plaque problems. Alcohol, smoking and certain drugs also affect gum health and resistance to infections. Finally, certain nutrients known to be low in PD, when supplemented, have a remarkable effect on even seemingly "irreversible" PD. One of these supplements is Co-Enzyme Q10 (CoQ10).

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### CoQ10 to the Rescue

As early as 1971, low CoQ10 levels were recorded in people with periodontal disease by CoQ10 expert, Dr. Karl Folkers. Initial studies by Folkers resulted in “dramatic improvement” on just 50 mg of CoQ10 daily in only eight weeks, with 30% having complete resolution of PD symptoms. Participants had serious PD that had not responded to extensive flossing and brushing. Other studies corroborated what Folkers found. Even those facing oral surgery to remove diseased tissue recovered (no longer needing it). A longer, 12 week study measured five clinical findings of gum redness, swelling, pus discharge, tooth mobility and depth of periodontal pockets on 100 mg CoQ10 daily over traditional hygiene alone. For patients in a U.S. Air Force Medical Center study, 75 mg daily of CoQ10 reduced the depths of gum pockets and improved PD. A Japanese study used 60 mg of CoQ10 a day with similar beneficial results.

### The road to Gum disease...

- Only** 25% of adults brush after every meal  
49% of men brush twice a day  
57% of women twice a day
- Equals** 75% of American over age 35 affected by PD

Source: [www.ADA.org](http://www.ADA.org)



One way CoQ10 may help is by increasing oxygen to cells as bacteria cannot survive in oxygen states. Another way, obviously, is as an antioxidant. Another pioneer researcher for PD, Dr. Edward G. Wilkinson cited “extra-ordinary healing” with CoQ10. Since all cells require CoQ10 for life, Wilkinson believed healing the cells was one way to reverse the disease. A newer study testing CoQ10 taken as a lozenge showed gum health improved faster, perhaps due to a longer CoQ10 exposure to involved micro-organisms. In Japan, 50% of dentists recommend CoQ10 for dental health. If you’re thinking of trying it, a suggested dose for preventive care is 60 mg once daily and 2-3 times daily for therapeutic use. Your doctor can also screen you for the bacteria present in PD, as well as check and monitor blood levels of CoQ10.

### HEALTHY HABITS

- ◆ Eat fruits, veggies to stimulate gums
- ◆ Avoid sugar & refined carbs that promote plaque
- ◆ Change toothbrush monthly if infections present; every 3 months otherwise. Or go electric—they’re twice as effective against plaque
- ◆ Opt for soft bristles on brushes to not irritate gums
- ◆ Use fingertips to massage gums
- ◆ Check for low CoQ10 blood levels
- ◆ Floss daily to interrupt mouth film
- ◆ Get professional cleaning & screening every 6 months



### Other Nutrient Helpers

Although CoQ10 has the most impressive results in the shortest time, several other nutrients help strengthen immunity and speed PD recovery. Vitamin C and bioflavonoids offer antioxidant defense and promote cell growth to rebuild connective tissue. Calcium and magnesium support bony structures, along with boron, vitamin K and manganese. Vitamins A and beta carotene are needed for healthy gum tissue and are antioxidants too. Vitamin E and grape seed extract offer anti-inflammatory and antioxidant benefits. Many of these nutrients can be found in a good multiple. Finally, consider systemic enzymes. They help reduce inflammatory markers to promote healing and decrease symptoms of pain and swelling. Now, let’s see that healthy smile!

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