

TOOTHFULLY *speaking*



THE GUT & MOUTH ~ JUST ONE LONG TUBE!

Dr. Preety Desai

Oral bacteria cause chaos in the mouth: plaque, tooth decay, periodontal disease, ulcers, cavities, staining and bad breath. Yet, just like the gut, good bacteria have to balance with the “bad bacteria.”

Certain foods favour good bacteria to prevent disease, while other foods support bad bacteria causing havoc. The average person has 20 to 100 billion bacteria in their mouth, which is more than the entire human population. There are more than 700 different species of bacteria that can live in the human mouth. Add to that number, viruses and fungi and you have a huge metropolis. Researchers are saying even oral herpes viruses reduce the mouth's immunity against gum disease bacteria.

But all bacteria are not bad – some are actually involved in keeping you healthy. *Scientific American* showed that avoiding halitosis (bad breath) requires the right balance of oral microbes in your mouth and gut. The good bacteria keep the bad ones in check by producing proteins that control their growth. Bacteria in your mouth reside in plaque, the sticky biofilm that covers the surfaces of your teeth. It is the regular removal of biofilm that keeps gum disease from worsening.

Strep salivarius is found naturally in the mouth and has anti-microbial properties that can naturally reduce cariogenic and periodontal disease in the mouth by disrupting the bad bacteria's ability to produce plaque on the teeth. *Lactobacillus* bacteria show a significant ability to inhibit growth of bad bacteria and *Candida*.

Strep mutans causes tooth decay by feeding on sugars and produce an acidic environment in the mouth. *Porphyromonas gingivalis* causes gum disease and tooth loss. Offensive bad breath is mainly caused by volatile sulphur compounds.

People with periodontal disease are twice as likely to suffer from coronary artery disease than those not afflicted by this condition. *Lancet* showed the presence of moderate gum disease can increase the risk of cancer by 14 percent. The thought is that pathogenic bacteria make their way into the blood and decrease the body's immune response.

So to keep your mouth and body healthy:

1. Don't smoke.
2. Eat foods that are rich in minerals & vitamins.
3. Avoid sugary, sticky snacks, which can encourage plaque growth.
4. Brush your teeth after every meal and before going to bed.
5. Floss at least once a day.
6. Go for regular dental checkups.
7. Visit your dentist if your gums are bleeding or swollen.

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