

Resolve To Eliminate Stress and Save Your Oral Health

The holidays are always stressful. They can be stressful emotionally, physically, and financially. You can probably feel the stress taking its toll on your mind, body, and spirit. What you may not realize is that your everyday stress may be affecting your oral health.

A literature review published in the August issue of the *Journal of Periodontology (JOP)* saw a strong relationship between stress and periodontal diseases; 57% of the studies included in the review showed a positive relationship between periodontal diseases and psychological factors such as stress, distress, anxiety, depression and loneliness.

While more research is needed to explain the specific role stress plays in gum disease, it is speculated that the hormone cortisol may play a role. When experiencing stress, the body releases increased amounts of cortisol, which can be harmful to the gums and surrounding bone tissue. This damage can eventually cause bone loss which leads tooth loss.

People with high stress levels are also more likely to increase their use of drugs or alcohol which can undermine oral health. Stress can also cause an individual to be less attentive to their oral hygiene. Exercise, a balanced diet and a positive mental attitude are all ways to help reduce stress and ultimately help promote periodontal health.

So this holiday season, don't let the stress of life take a toll on your oral health. Having a healthy mouth can mean having a healthy body and that is a resolution everyone should make.

^{1, 2} Peruzzo DC, Benatti BB, Ambrosano GMB, Nogueira-Filho GR, Sallum EA, Casati MZ, Nociti Jr. FH. A Systematic Review of Stress and Psychological Factors as Possible Risk Factors for Periodontal Disease. *J. Periodontology*. 2007, Vol. 78, No. 8, Pages 1491-1504.

³ Kibayashi M, Tanaka M, Nishida N, Kuboniwa N, Kataoka K, Nagata H, Nakayama, Morimoto KK, Shizukuishi S. Longitudinal Study of the Association Between Smoking as a Periodontitis Risk and Salivary Biomarkers Related to Periodontitis. *J. Periodontology*. 2007, Vol. 78, No. 5, Pages 859-867 1491-1504.



Other New Year's Resolutions to Fix Your Oral Health

Stress isn't the only thing that can worsen the state of your mouth. Smoking and lack of sleep top the list of lifestyle factors affecting your oral health according to a study in the May 2007 issue of the *Journal of Periodontology*.

Smoking: The study found that the number one lifestyle factor that independently impacted the progression of periodontal disease was smoking. Over 41% of study participants who showed periodontal disease progression from 1999 to 2003 were current smokers. This suggests that smoking may help the progression of periodontal disease.

Sleep: Lack of sleep was identified as a significant lifestyle factor that may play a role in the progression of periodontal disease. The participants who received seven to eight hours of sleep exhibited less progression of periodontal disease than those who received six hours of sleep or less.³

