

## DR. CAROL FORD

### Gum disease can lead to heart disease

By Diane McIntyre

You eat right, you exercise, you don't smoke — you consider yourself healthy.

Um, not so fast. How are your gums? Do they bleed when you brush your teeth? Have you visited the dentist lately?

You might be surprised to learn that periodontal disease, which affects the gums and bone that support the teeth, can lead to the development of heart disease, diabetes, respiratory disease and premature birth weight, said Phoenix dentist and oral health-care expert Carol Ford.

“With gum disease, bacteria gets into the open capillaries in and around teeth,” she said. “The bacteria attach to red blood cells and can travel to the heart, triggering a heart attack. Those same bacteria can worsen infections in your body.”

Researchers suggest that periodontal disease might cause oral bacterial components to enter the bloodstream and cause the liver to make C-reactive proteins, a predictor for increased risk for cardiovascular disease.

#### **Meticulous home care**

Keeping your gums healthy starts with meticulous care at home and should begin in childhood. “Brushing and flossing daily helps keep your gums healthy,” Dr. Ford said. So does seeing your dentist regularly.

“Some people don't get cavities and don't have problems with their teeth, so they don't go to the dentist, but approximately 80 percent of the population has gum disease.”

Left untreated, gum disease can lead to the formation of pockets around the teeth, causing bacteria to flourish and leading to eventual tooth loss — and the development of the diseases noted above.

Dr. Ford and her staff partner with you to develop a preventive



oral health-care strategy that includes regular office visits and in-home self-care. She offers a complete range of comprehensive treatments from cosmetic, implant and reconstructive dentistry to everyday general dental care in a gentle, caring office environment.

  
DR. CAROL FORD



#### **LOCATION**

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#### **WEB SITE**

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