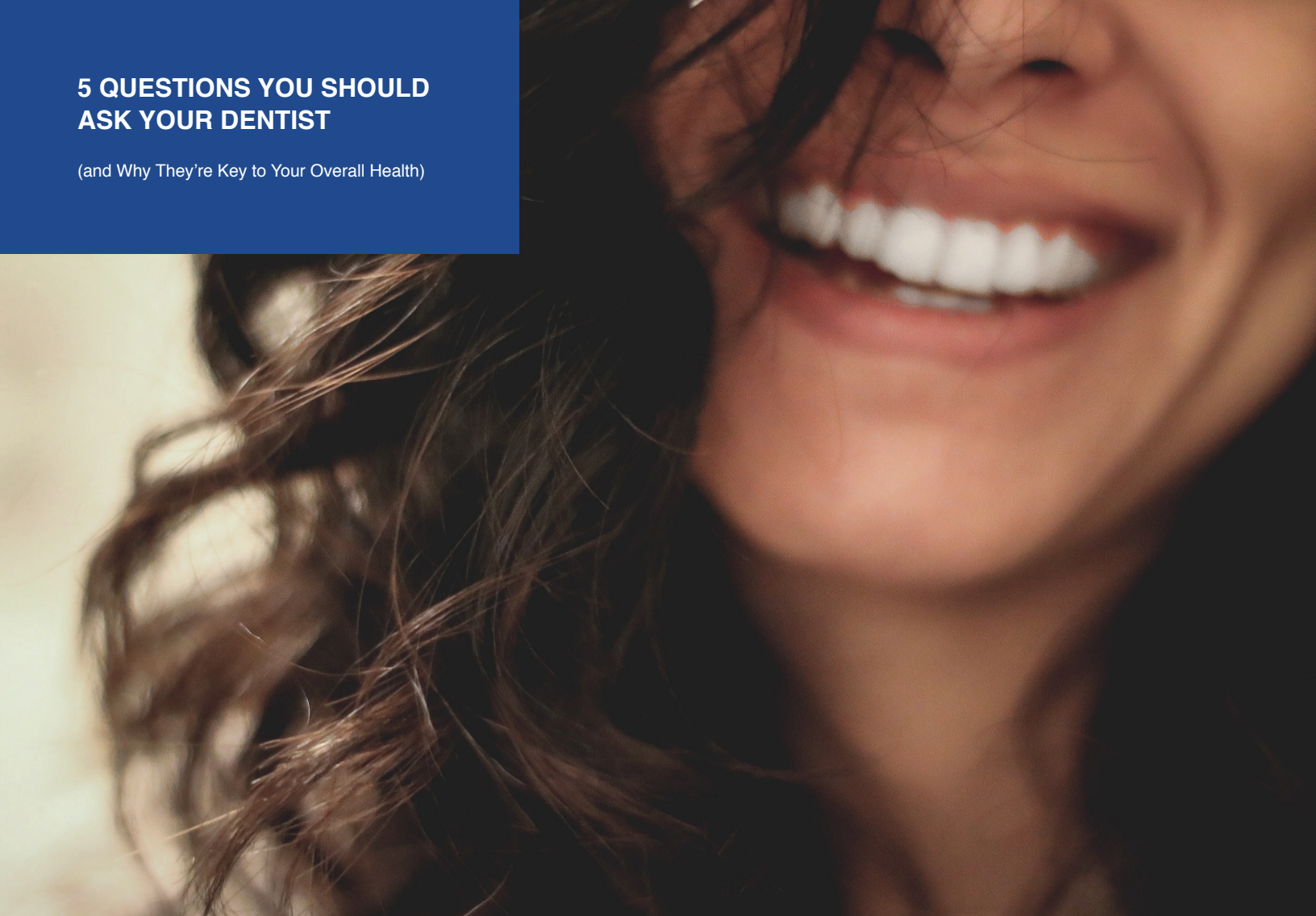


5 QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK YOUR DENTIST

(and Why They're Key to Your Overall Health)

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Caring for your mouth properly will greatly reduce your chances of many diseases, including cardiovascular disease, stroke, and pregnancy complications. That's why asking your dentist the right questions will give you life-saving information.

Research shows that many diseases, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, Alzheimer's, and pregnancy complications, can be a result of poor oral health. This is all part of the oral systemic connection. Visiting a dentist and asking the right questions will help you make the right dental choices and improve your overall health.

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Check out these 5 questions you should ask your dentist.

1. Do you believe there is a link between oral health and overall health?

Your oral health does have a direct impact on the health of the rest of your body. We hope your dentist and doctor recognize this connection.

Your dentist should evaluate the state of your teeth and gums during an exam to identify any problem areas like tooth decay or bleeding gums that could indicate the beginning stages of gum disease or cavity development.

Your dentist can also identify any infections in the teeth or gums, such as a cavity or an abscess in the tooth, periodontal probing over 3mm in the gums, or bleeding gums. These infections can spread to other parts of your body. If your dentist identifies any warning signs or conditions, you should immediately share this information with your primary medical doctor and any appropriate specialists to receive proper treatment.

Your dentist should also tell you if your occlusion or bite is healthy and if you have cuspid guidance with no lateral interference or another diagnosis. An unbalanced occlusion (bite) can cause headaches, neck pain, toothaches or broken teeth. You'll also be able to find out if you have any restrictions in your airway. If so, you may need to be checked for sleep apnea.

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2. How is my overall dental health?

Your dentist should provide you with a comprehensive assessment of your entire mouth so you can keep track of your dental health and if/ how it changes from visit to visit. This question should also lead to other discussions about the best way to care for your teeth and can help you anticipate any future treatments you may need. Your dentist will also be able to tell if you have any signs of oral cancer or gum disease.

You don't need to have any teeth to have a healthy mouth, but if you have teeth, you must not have infections.

3. Should I be concerned about gum disease?

Almost half of Americans have mild, moderate, or severe gum disease. Untreated gum disease can lead to tooth loss and has been proven to cause cardiovascular disease and many other health problems. Your dentist can tell you if you're at risk for gum disease and what you can do to treat or prevent it from worsening. Preventing and treating gum disease is critical to maintaining the overall health of your body.

If your dentist diagnoses you with gum disease, it's important to share that information with your primary care physician. Your doctor can help you identify ways the disease may have spread to other parts of your body and develop a treatment plan if necessary.

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4. How often do I need an oral exam and cleaning?

Most dentists recommend you have a tooth cleaning and exam every six months. However, if you're in the beginning or moderate stages of gum disease, they may suggest more frequent cleanings, such as every three months.

Dental insurance usually covers two regular cleanings per year, but even an out-of-pocket cleaning that costs \$100-200 short-term is worth the potential cost of further tooth decay, which would require expensive treatments and possibly lead to systemic medical issues like heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia, diabetic complications and more.

5. What's the best oral hygiene plan for my mouth?

Your dentist can recommend an at-home cleaning plan tailored to the state of your unique teeth and gums. Some people may benefit from using an electric toothbrush. Others may need a soft toothbrush. Some may want to invest in directed water irrigation with a water pick to help clean out bacteria and toxins between the teeth.

If you have sensitive teeth, your dentist can recommend a specific kind of toothpaste. Others may need to alter their diet to better care for their oral health.

**These five questions will provide you with the information you need to take better care of your mouth. Share what you learn from your dentist with your primary care doctor.*

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Here's the list of questions to bring to your next dental visit:

Do you believe there is a link between oral health and overall health?

How is my overall dental health?

- Do I have any caries (cavities) or abscessed teeth that could be linked to other health issues in my body?)
- Do I have proper occlusion (bite) to help avoid headaches, neck aches, toothaches and broken teeth?

Should I be concerned about Gum Disease?

How often do I need to have an oral exam and cleaning?

What's the best oral hygiene plan for my mouth?

**Remember to share this information with your primary care doctor*

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Dentists, please share this information with your patient's primary care physician:

Patient's name:

Does the patient have any caries (cavities) or abscessed teeth that could be linked to other health issues in his/her body? *Please explain.*

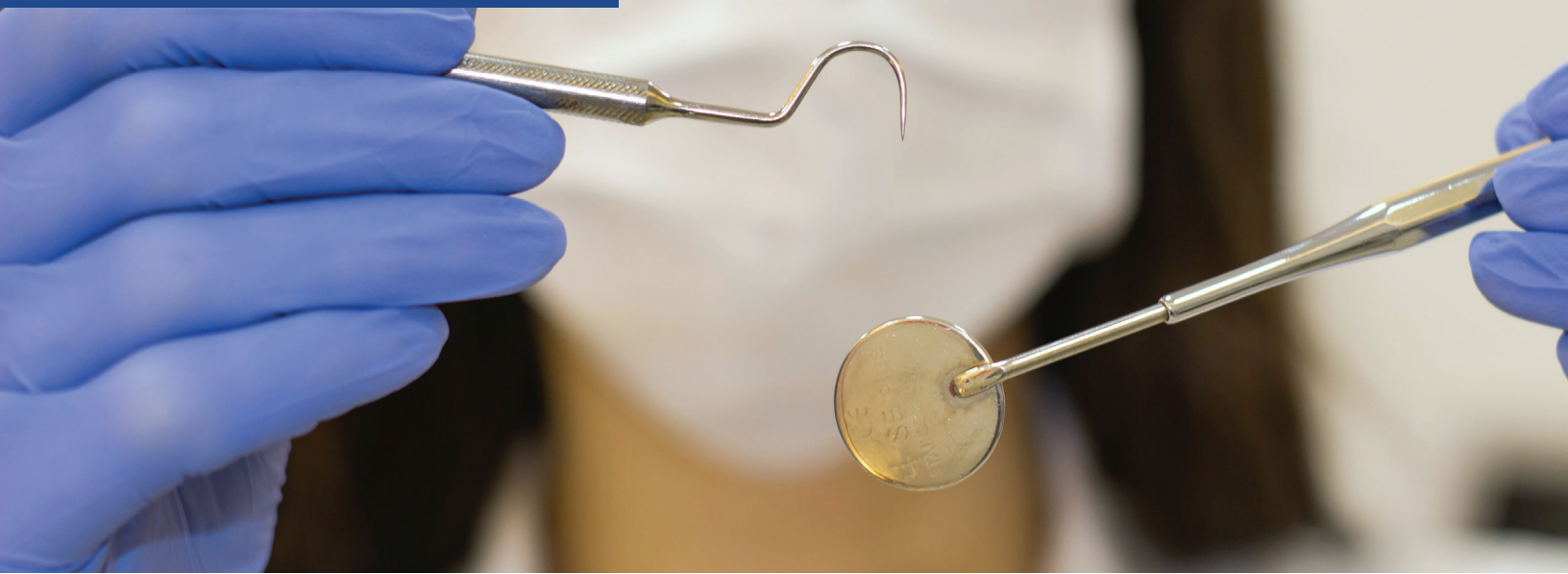
Does the patient have proper occlusion (bite) to help avoid headaches, neck aches, toothaches or broken teeth? *Please explain.*

Does the patient have Gum Disease that could be connected to other health issues?

Anything else the doctor should know about the patient's dental health?

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Continue to learn about the oral systemic connection with The Dental Medical Convergence.

At The Dental Medical Convergence, we know that caring for your mouth means caring for your overall health. You need the right information and latest research in order to make healthy decisions. You can't rely on your doctor or dentist to tell you the information you need to know. You need to ask the right questions. We're here to help you do that.

To learn more about the oral systemic connection, and to read the latest research, follow us on Facebook and at thedentalmedicalconvergence.org.

You can also ask Dr. Chuck questions by sending them to AMA@TheDentalMedicalConvergence.org.