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In this issue of our Newsletter:

As Seen on SimpleSteps The Better Denal Health...

Periodontal Disease Is a Risk Factor for Heart Woes

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**By Nancy Volkers
InteliHealth News Service**

INTELIHEALTH - People with signs of periodontal disease are more likely to develop high blood pressure and risky cholesterol levels, a study finds.

Researchers from the Nihon University School of Dentistry in Tokyo did the study. It included 1,023 adults. At the start of the study all subjects had no signs of metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome is a group of factors that increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. They include:

- Excess fat around the waist
- Cholesterol problems - These may include high LDL (bad), cholesterol, low HDL (good) cholesterol, and high triglycerides
- High blood pressure
- Problems with blood sugar
- High levels of certain blood proteins

People in the study had dental and medical check-ups between 2002 and 2006. Some people had periodontal pockets that were enlarged. Periodontal pockets are spaces between the gums and teeth. They can increase in size with periodontal (gum) disease.

People with periodontal disease were more likely than those without periodontal disease to develop high blood pressure during the study. They were even more likely to develop cholesterol problems.

There was no link between having missing teeth and developing metabolic syndrome. Researchers also did not find a link between tooth decay and metabolic syndrome.

Other studies have linked periodontal disease with metabolic syndrome. A study in 2008 looked at nearly 14,000 American adults. Metabolic syndrome was found in 18% of people with mild gum disease. It was found in 34% of those with moderate gum disease and 37% of those with severe disease.

Studies also have linked periodontal disease with risks for artery disease, heart disease and stroke.

The Japanese study appears in the April issue of the Journal of Periodontology.

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