

HARRISBURG, Pa. (May 14, 2019) – People don't always think about their oral care when assessing their risk of suffering a stroke. But United Concordia Dental points out that research indicates an association between regular oral care and stroke risk for individuals with periodontitis or other forms of gum disease.

During National Stroke Awareness Month, it is important to remember the value of preventive oral care as part of maintaining your overall health and reducing your stroke risk. Untreated gum disease can lead to inflamed tissues and the release of bacteria into the bloodstream, where it can increase the risk of a stroke or heart attack.

Because of this, people who already know they're at increased risk for a stroke should be particularly vigilant about caring for their gums, according to Quinn Dufurrena, D.D.S., J.D., chief dental officer for United Concordia.

"Your gums are full of blood vessels, and there's a great deal of bacteria in the mouth," Dufurrena says. "When your gums are disturbed, that bacteria ends up in your bloodstream and creates inflammation that can damage blood vessels."

Backed by research that explored associations between oral care and certain chronic conditions (including stroke), United Concordia offers customers enhanced dental benefits solutions that make it easier and less expensive for patients to get the gum disease care they need.

The Smile for Health®--Wellness product provides enhanced coverage for periodontal disease treatment and maintenance for people with chronic conditions such as stroke, diabetes and heart disease. These improved benefits make periodontal services more affordable for members, reducing their out-of-pocket costs.

"Patients can reduce their likelihood of strokes by quitting smoking and managing their blood pressure and cholesterol levels," says Dufurrena. "But taking care of your gums is also an important part of that preventive regimen."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each year about 795,000 people in the United States have a stroke. Approximately 140,000 Americans die from strokes every year, and stroke is a leading cause of serious long-term disability for those who survive.

For more information about United Concordia products, visit <https://www.unitedconcordia.com>

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