United Concordia - Newsroom

CAMP HILL, Pa. (May 4, 2023) – Your mouth might have something to say about the health of your eyes. During Healthy Vision Month in May, research pointing to a link between gum disease and an increased risk of glaucoma supports that oral health is connected to overall health.

Some studies have found that the oral bacteria associated with gum disease may play a role in the development of glaucoma – a group of eye disorders that damage the eye's optic nerve and cause vision loss. About 3 million people in the U.S. have glaucoma, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"What researchers suspect is that the inflammatory bacteria found in gum disease can travel to the optic nerve through the nervous system, triggering a damaging reaction in the eye," said Roosevelt Allen, DDS, MAGD, ABGD, chief dental officer, United Concordia Dental. "These findings continue to reinforce that the health of your mouth can influence the health of your whole body."

An estimated 50% of adults over the age of 30 have some form of gum disease, also known as periodontal disease, which is a condition where the bacteria in plaque cause inflammation of the gums and affect the supporting areas around the teeth. If left untreated, gum disease can lead to tooth loss, bone loss and other complications.

Gum disease has been associated with several other systemic diseases, including diabetes, heart disease and Alzheimer's.

To help prevent and control gum disease, the CDC recommends a combination of good oral hygiene and regular professional dental cleanings and treatment. Brushing your teeth twice a day, flossing once daily and regularly visiting the dentist are essential parts of oral care for gum disease prevention.

"Gum disease is not always painful, so keep an eye out for other warning signs, such as red and swollen gums, persistent bad breath and bleeding while brushing or flossing," said Allen. "If you notice any of these symptoms, it's always best to go to the dentist for an evaluation."

To learn more about United Concordia, visit UnitedConcordia.com.

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